THE SPIRIT ON THE WATERS

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The Evolution of the Divine From the Human

BY

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"And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the Waters."—*Genesis* i. 2

"Where mortal and immortal merge,
And human dies divine."
WATSON

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PREFACE

THESE pages are part of a work written three or four years ago (1893) to set forth the grounds for accepting a non-miraculous Christianity. It consisted of two portions, one, critical, detailed, and mostly negative in its conclusions; the other, non-critical, general, and for the most part constructive. The whole was intended to be published as one treatise, but not until the former part had been revised and corrected by the results of a renewed study of all the Gospels and especially the Fourth. However, the recent advice of a friend, who dissents from much of the negative matter but sets a perhaps unmerited value on the positive, has induced me to publish the latter separately and at once.

In this course there is the disadvantage that the work does not explain why the miraculous element is rejected. In the original draft, a sixth part of the whole was devoted to the discussion of the historical basis for the belief in Christ's Resurrection; and the

conclusion arrived at was that the visible and oral manifestations of the Saviour after death were of the same kind as those that converted St. Paul, real, and objective, but in a spiritual not in a material sense. Another portion treated of the relations of the Gospels to one another, and especially of the Fourth to the Three. All this—together with an investigation into the origins of the narratives of many of the miracles, and particularly of the Miraculous Conception—is now omitted, to be published hereafter on a larger scale.

This much, however, may be said here, that the miracles are rejected, not as being essentially impossible, but because, after a study of such as are recorded in the Bible, the weakness of the positive evidence, and the strength of the negative evidence, and in many cases the ease with which they can be explained without resort to miraculous causes, forced me to the conclusion that they are as historically false as the spiritual claims of the Bible are true.

The author's recollection of the importance he himself once attached to the miraculous element in the Bible is far too vivid to allow him to wish for a moment to disturb those who can sincerely believe in it and who have a fair chance of retaining the belief through life. To them, therefore, this volume does not address itself. Nor does it appeal to the merely curious

reader. The aphoristic style was deliberately adopted in order to repel all but those who are genuinely interested in the subject for its own sake and who find both in the world and in the Bible very serious obstacles to intelligent and sincere faith. For them and for them alone the author has attempted to state his reasons, independently of miracles, for worshipping God as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and for accepting, in the fullest spiritual sense, the Incarnation, the Resurrection, the Atonement, and the Divinity, of Christ.

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BOOK I

NATURAL CHRISTIANITY

CHAPTER I

FAITH

1 Faith in Causes

§ 1

STRICTLY speaking, we "know" nothing except *past* co-existences and sequences, for example, that a stone fell, when we let it drop, a moment ago.

We do not "know," we only "believe," that it will fall, when we let it drop, a moment hence.

§ 2

Since everything, in the world of sense, is in a state of flux, there is a change—infinitesimal, but still a change—in every sensible object about which we speak, even while we are speaking; so that, while the word "is" passes from our lips, we ought, strictly speaking, to alter it into "was," and "is" should vanish from the scientific vocabulary. Plato would not deny this. For we are speaking of the world of sense. In that, strictly speaking, we do not know anything about what "*is*."

§ 3

In practice, however, "is" and "will be" are everything, and "was" (comparatively) nothing. The past does not interest most of us except as it bears on the present or future.

§ 4

It follows that knowledge, in itself, merely concerns past history. For the purposes of the present and the future it can be of no use unless it calls an ally to its aid.

§ 5

That ally is *faith*. By faith in the regular sequence of phenomena that are yet to come, we are able to bring the future within the scope of our knowledge of the past, so that we can both predict phenomena and produce them.

§ 6

Without an instinctive faith that the things that have been will be, no child could learn to walk.

Through faith in the uniformity of Nature, Newton discovered a theory that explains the fall of an apple and the motions of the planets. Science has never gained a triumph that has not been in part due to faith.

§ 7

We can never "know" causes.

For example, when we say "we *know* lightning to be the *cause* of thunder," we imply, not only that, whenever thunder occurred in the past, it was preceded by lightning, but also that, whenever it occurs in the future, it will be preceded by lightning. Strictly speaking, we do not "know" this; we "believe" it.

i The Newtonian astronomy rests upon what is but a hypothesis. We "feel certain" of it, partly perhaps because of its beauty and simplicity, but mainly because it agrees with, and helps us to explain, to predict, and (sometimes) to produce, complex phenomena in earth, water, sun, moon, and stars.

The key that fits exactly the wards of the lock, and easily opens the door, commends itself as the right key because it "works." So the hypothesis that "every particle of matter attracts every other" commends itself as a right hypothesis because it "works."

ii Yet many philosophers would refuse to commit themselves to a belief that there is such a thing as "matter." "Instead of the words 'particle of matter,' substitute 'centre of force,' and," say they, "we might have precisely the same results."

iii This seems to you, perhaps, absurd. This book in your hand, your hand itself, are they not manifestly made up of some kind of "stuff," i.e. "material," or "matter"?

No more manifestly than the "firm and sure-set earth" is fixed, as your forefathers supposed it to be. "Centres of force" would produce on you the same sensations of sight and touch. You do not "know" that there is any such thing as "matter"; nor can you refute those who deny its existence.

2 *Faith in Will*

§ 1

"But cannot we 'know' our own will to be a cause?"

Strictly speaking, you cannot. Take an instance. You have a stone in your hand. Will to hold it. "I do: it is held." Will to drop it. "It is dropped." What causes the stone to be dropped? "The motion of my muscles." What moves your muscles? "My will."

How do you know that? You only know that the motion of your muscles instantaneously followed what you call the exercise of your will. But what if your supposed consciousness of will is nothing more than a kind of frictional warmth arising from some machinery within you that really moves your muscles? If so, your will no more moves your muscles than friction moves a cart wheel. You are a machine. Something, or some one, winds it up and sets it going. Just before it starts, or when it is in the act of starting, the machinery grows hot. This heat—thus an Agnostic

might argue—you call your will, and honour with the name of "cause."

§ 2

Or take this view. Suppose you are in doubt whether to hold or drop the stone. After you have mentally repeated "Drop it?" "Hold it?" some dozen times, a sudden disgust at this prolonged oscillation, and an irresistible desire to do something decisive and to end suspense, may compel you on the thirteenth repetition to drop it. Or else, a latent obstinacy or perverseness may rise to the surface and force you to say, "No, after all, nothing shall be done. I will hold it." Now a subtle psychologist, who has studied you closely, might not inconceivably be able to foretell which of these courses you would take, and even when you would take it. But, if he is able to predict what you will do, and when you will do it, and perhaps even to explain the causes that will *make* you do it, what becomes of your will as a cause?

§ 3

All this is logically unanswerable. Moreover it is a matter of experience, as regards children, drunkards, and very sensual and selfish people whom we call the slaves of their passions, that we can often predict what they will "will."

i But it remains true that the vast majority of well-ordered and civilized men believe, and have believed,

that they have a will for which they feel themselves morally responsible. They cannot prove it. It is but a faith. But it is a faith on which society is built up, and without which society would fall to pieces. And our experience of the high moral utility of this faith strengthens the faith itself.

ii It is of course arguable that, just as there *may be* no "matter," but only something corresponding to "matter," so there *may be* no "will."

True, it is "arguable." But we are not now discussing logic, but faith based on experience; not "arguabilities," but "credibilities." And we maintain that, judged by our experience of what *works*, it is even more "credible" (that is to say, a fitter object of reasonable *belief*, or *faith*) that there is a will than that there is "matter."

For, as has been seen, take away "matter," and we have a credible substitute, viz. "centres of force." But take away "will," and what substitute have we? The belief that we are machines? Such a belief, if universally adopted to-day, would extinguish human society to-morrow.

§ 4

Consequently, although people may *argue*, as a speculation, that we have no will; and that we are all machines, or beasts; and that it is as absurd to call a murderer or an adulterer a villain as it would be to speak of a wicked tiger or an immoral steam-engine—yet, in fact, such arguments do not touch us, who

believe. We decline to argue at all about the truth of such propositions. Or, if we do, we shall argue only on the ground of experience, meaning, by "true," that which works best; which helps us to produce the best results; which does not tend to make us deny facts; and which (as we believe) approximates, or "corresponds," to absolute, objective truth.

§ 5

We are thus led to the conclusion that for the very deepest and most salutary truth about our own being—a truth affecting our morality and social welfare at every moment of our lives—we are indebted, largely, and indeed mainly, not to knowledge but to reasonable faith based on experience of that which "works."

3 Faith in a Supreme Will or God

§ 1

We have seen that the majority of mankind have been impelled by experience and reason to a belief in the existence of something that they cannot prove to exist, something within each of us, of the nature of a cause. Turning now from the little world of our individual selves to the great world outside us, if we ask what may be the cause of the Universe, we are led by experience and reason, not perhaps at once to believe,

but to conjecture, that this, too, like the cause within us, may be reasonable "Will."

i First, we observe the complex order and development of the Universe, and compare it with our experience of human constructions.

ii Then, we reason that the Universe may have been constructed by Mind and Will corresponding to the mind and will of which we say we are conscious when we construct. Impressed by the signs of unity in the structure of the Universe, we think that this Will may be the Will of One. Contemplating the evolution of an Isaiah, a St. Paul, a Shakespeare, and a Newton, from a protoplasm, we conjecture that this Will may be righteous as well as reasonable. Lastly, catching glimpses of the supremacy of righteousness and reason over all other forces, we are moved to call this Will Supreme.

iii On the other hand, when we contemplate the evolution of a Tiberius and a Nero from the same origin, we pause, and doubt: "Is there," we ask, "one Supreme Will after all? Are there not, if any, two Wills, or more? Or, if there is one, is it righteous?"

§ 2

Moreover, from within ourselves, there arises an objection to this theory about what is outside ourselves. "Will," with us human beings, implies effort; and effort seems to imply something that we should call

active or passive resistance. How can a will be "supreme" if the very word "will" presupposes resistance?

i It is true that in the developed man the exercise of the will implies less and less of effort and approximates more and more to mere thought. For example, after the long and tedious training of early childhood, the boy walks without consciousness of will; the educated man understands what he reads, and scarcely knows that he is reading; the inspired musician or the painter of genius creates, touching his instruments indeed, but, at times, almost, if not quite, unconscious of external or internal effort: he *thinks*, and it is done. So, the man of honest character abstains from theft, and the man of trained unselfishness from covetousness, and the true Christian does great Christ-like deeds, and all these often without sense of willing, or even of thinking. The good man mostly does what he does, not because he *wills*, nor because he *thinks*, but because he *is what he is*. "I will" appears to be succeeded by "I think," and "I think" by "I am."

ii Nevertheless, at the bottom of all the above-enumerated actions, physical, mental, and moral, there has been an initial and fundamental exercise of will, i.e. of force conscious of effort and implying resistance. Will, therefore, was a first cause of them all.

No essentially human act (as distinct from the actions that we share with animals) was ever performed, no conscious thought elaborated, no character formed,

without the pre-existence of will and the exercise of force overcoming obstacles.

But if the First Cause was a Supreme Will, whence came the "obstacles"? Are we, after all, to believe in one Will, or in more than one, as the origin of the Universe?

§ 3

Different answers have been given to this question.

Polytheistic nations, formerly the vast majority of mankind, reasoned, naturally enough, that there must be many wills, sometimes conflicting, and none really supreme.

Others, together with a select exceptional few among polytheists, argued from the marks of unity of design in the world that there must be one Designer or Artificer.

§ 4

The latter class, the monotheists, have seldom been led to their conclusion by fair impartial argument from all the facts.

The ancient monotheistic philosophers have generally fixed their thoughts on such phenomena as exhibit harmony and order (the motions of the heavenly bodies, for example), comparatively disregarding the apparent waste in the production of vegetable life, the continual struggle for existence among animals, and the disorder manifest in the moral nature of man. Disproportionately influenced by the intellectual and moral

attractiveness of the theory of the supremacy of a single Mind, they have believed, because they wished to believe it, more than evidence could make logically probable. The conception, once formed, that the First Cause was a wise and righteous Will, seemed to them too beautiful not to be true.

§ 5

This introduces a new kind of belief or faith. Above, we spoke of the faith that what has been will be, faith in Law, faith in the unalterable sequences of things. Now we are led to a faith in a general Harmony of things.

The polytheists were led by a kind of logic to infer from apparent conflict in the world the existence of many Wills sometimes conflicting; the monotheistic philosophers, by a kind of faith, to believe that, in spite of apparent cosmic disorder, there was but one originating Will.

§ 6

The Christian religion combines the polytheistic recognition of facts with a faith resembling that of the philosophers in being based on that which is morally beautiful as well as on that which is evidentially true.

i It does not deny the signs of disorder in the world, but it declares that such disorders as are real and not apparent are the results of a resistance which the Supreme Will has been, and is, overcoming, and subordinating to the purposes of order.

ii We may also say that the New Testament *never describes the Supreme as "Almighty,"* except when quoting the Old Testament. The only exceptions are one or two in the Apocalypse, as, for example, where the elders around the Throne sum up in one "that which was, and is, and is to come." [1]

In other words, the Will that we worship, though already revealed to us as Supreme in all moral and spiritual attributes (which constitute real supremacy), will only hereafter be fully revealed to us as having been, from the first, Supreme in might or power.

iii We have seen above, that, in ourselves, "I will" seems to pass, at one time, into "I act," at another, into "I think," at another, into "I am."

This suggests that the Supreme Will may be revealed in different aspects as being Force, Thought, Person.

iv It may be also argued that the term "almighty" is, in itself, a logical inconsistency—if, at least, might means force, and if force cannot be conceived apart from obstacle. For when that which is "almighty" has destroyed every obstacle, does it not cease to imply "might"?

[1] The use of the word in the Old Testament is well worth noting. It occurs in the book of Job more than thirty times, and, in all the other books together, only sixteen times. The book of Genesis uses it six times, that of Exodus only once, and there (vi. 3) as a rudimentary revelation. In the book of Numbers it is used twice, but—by Balaam. The Prophets use it but four times; the Psalms only twice.

These facts suggest that those who now lay stress on this attribute of God are going back to a rudimentary revelation, which exaggerates the difficulties of the problem of evil.

This last consideration suggests to us that, in attempting to use words about the First, or Macrocosmic, Cause, we may be plunging into waters out of our depth. Had we not better give up using words at all about it

Surely not, unless we are prepared to do the same about the microcosmic cause, i.e. our own will. Perhaps we should give up *these* words, or some of them; but it does not follow that we should give up *all* words. For to give up using words means, practically, to give up thinking, and to ignore.

Now if we refuse to ignore what we believe to be our will, because to do so would be the ruin of society, may we not be justified by similar reasons in refusing to ignore what we believe to be the Supreme Will? Both beliefs may be illogical, but both may be found to "work," that is, to be in accordance with experience.

§ 7

By "experience" we mean, in the first place, the internal experience of that moral and spiritual harmony which is essential to the best development of humanity, that collection of qualities which St. Paul is wont to describe as "the fruits of the Spirit." Whoever feels that the belief in a Supreme Will strengthens these qualities in him and others, bringing him and them into concord with the spiritual order, has evidence that the belief "works."

i If, for example, a belief clears the mind from timorous superstitions and folly-breeding myths, and

leaves it fearless and free for the keen observation of things as they really are, in the hope of discovering the real causes of things; if it so far encourages the feelings of fellowship and the passionate love of truth as to lead men to combine in search of it and to subordinate their single selves with a view to its discovery; but especially if it tends to bind society together in mutual goodwill resulting in moral harmony and collective development—this constitutes evidence that the belief "works," and to neglect the evidence of such experience will be unreasonable.

ii Belief in God is of two kinds, not to be confused. On the one hand, it may be consciously based on evidence (mostly external) and may be merely suffused, and, as it were, warmed, by a desire to believe the best concerning Him. Then, it is like water. It is inexpansive. It needs support. We mention it in the same breath with "probability." Divines discuss it, and it interests educated people of leisure. But it does not touch the masses, nor penetrate to the centre of a single soul.

On the other hand, when belief or faith in God has generated in the heart, first, a sense of benefit arising from the belief, and then a thrill of gratitude or loyalty, it seems as though, at a certain stage, heated by some spiritual fire, it passes into a new being, as water is changed into steam, not now needing support, but self-supported, floating upwards, expansive, becoming a great power in the world.

§ 8

A vast multitude of human beings, probably the majority, seem so constituted that they *must* have *some* belief about the First Cause, or Nature, or God.

i An inherent restlessness, or curiosity, or aspiration—call it by what name you like, it exists, all the same—drives men to find some working hypothesis, superstition, or faith, about the origin of themselves and things round them. Unless this desire is satisfied, they cannot get on at all; and if it is satisfied in the wrong way, they get on badly. (By "getting on" we mean doing the plain and obvious business of secular life with a reasonable amount of harmony and development.)

ii "But religion has produced evil." So has food. "Religion has taught lies." So has history, and so has science. The question is as to the balance between the good and the evil, the truth and the falsehood. It will be time enough for non-believers to recommend the abolition of Christianity when they can point to a nation that has abandoned it and yet retained a national life, worthy of the name, for a single century. Or, at least, they ought to be able to appeal to instances of families of non-believers that have continued to do good and vigorous work to the third or fourth generation.

Then, but not till then, will they have some basis of experience on their side. At present, most non-believers are men who have once believed, or, at least,

have been bred in traditions and environments of belief: and some of them, perhaps, are hardly aware how much they are indebted for their moral force to that which they have rejected in name, while retaining much of its essence.

§ 9

Before discussing "the evolution of the divine from the human," it will be well to state our belief that evolution is not only "*of* the divine," but also itself "divine." The difference between the two propositions is well brought out by an able writer, who, while accepting the phrase "evolution of ethics," has recently[1] implied that "the ethics of evolution" is a misnomer. Denying that evolution is "ethical," he would *a fortiori* deny that it is "divine."

Evil, he urges, is evolved as well as good; "the thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist"; "cosmic evolution may teach us how the good and the evil tendencies of man may have come about; but, in itself, it is incompetent to furnish any better reason why what we call good is preferable to what we call evil than we had before." He even ventures to say that "the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends," and that "cosmic nature is no school of virtue but the headquarters of the enemy of ethical nature."

i Everyone can understand the honourable indignation that refuses to call "ethical" (and would much

[1] Huxley's Romanes Lecture, 1893.

more strenuously refuse to call "divine") a blind, or brutal, or selfish struggle for existence. But, unless the writer recognises (as we do, but he apparently does not) an ethical Mind that is subordinating "cosmic nature," or "process," or "evolution," to ethical purposes, it is not so easy to understand how he can say that "the cosmic process has no sort of relation to moral ends," and that "cosmic nature is no school of virtue": for, grant that there is no such Mind, and it follows that there is nothing but "cosmic nature" to account for man, or for his "ethical nature," or for his "moral ends," any more than for a vegetable, or for a star. If so, "cosmic nature" must be pronounced man's "school of virtue" as well as his school of vice: and this indeed the writer appears to admit above when he says that "the thief and the murderer follow nature just as much as the philanthropist."

ii We contend, however, not only that cosmic nature must be called a "school of virtue," but also that it ought not to be called a "school of vice." The proposition just quoted from Mr. Huxley seems to us untrue. "Cosmic nature," taken in its fullest sense, shews signs, not only of ethical and non-ethical, divine and diabolical, *results*, but also of an ethical or divine *purpose, subordinating the non-ethical to the ethical, the diabolical to the divine.* Tiberius is not to be regarded as having followed "nature" (in the full sense of "cosmic evolution") "just as much as" Socrates. It is as false to say this as to say that a mad hound, snapping at the rest of the pack, follows "nature" "just as much as" the dogs that are sane.

"The thief and the murderer," on the whole, have not survived in the struggle for existence, but have gone to the wall, thereby proving that they were against "cosmic nature." If they had regarded cosmic nature as a school of virtue and obeyed the teaching, they would have, on the whole, survived; not having done so, they have, on the whole, perished.

§ 10

Later on, we shall endeavour to shew in detail the fallacy that has led to this condemnation of cosmic evolution. For the present, it must suffice to point out that it may be classified as one of the delusions called by Francis Bacon Idols of the Theatre, and may be named the Fallacy of Ostentation.

In the earliest struggles for survival, our attention is naturally arrested by the triumph of the survivors. The inflictors of suffering—though the reins of empire are in other hands—ostentatiously impose on us as if they themselves were playing the imperial part. This fallacy is natural when we behold the deliberate and conscious triumphs of human victors. When Marius rides to the Capitol, who gives a thought to poor captive Jugurtha as he turns off from the procession to the prison where he is to be strangled? But, in the pre-historic triumphs of cosmic nature, the conquered must not be forgotten; for they often shape the conquerors and indirectly bequeath them life and force. Yet to this we are comparatively blind. As the infliction of suffering passes upwards from non-human to human nature, and increases in selfishness and cruelty,

we are more struck by that than by the still greater and far more marvellous increase in the unselfishness, public spirit, enthusiasm and affection, which make men willing to suffer and often enable them to achieve triumphs through suffering. The tyrants oppress us, and we, for the moment, bow before them as supreme; the martyrs die for us and are, for the moment, forgotten, till they rise again in our hearts to claim supremacy. This is exactly what Bacon would call an Idol of the Theatre, a noisy, authoritative Pretender, "the Ruler of this World," "the Prince of the Powers of Darkness," dogmatizing to the servile multitude.

§ 11

The conclusion at which we hope to arrive, without doing violence to reason, is, that cosmic force evolves, not only the principle of selfish conflict, but also the principle of self-sacrifice that supersedes the former. Of course, some may reply, "Do not talk to us about your 'conclusions,' but about your guesses. Never, until you can explain the origin of evil, can you prove the existence of a good God controlling cosmic force. Cosmic force made you believers: us it has made unbelievers." But we have not undertaken to "prove" the existence of a good God. We simply point out that unbelievers who reject a "belief" in a good God, under cover of appeal to "cosmic nature," are disowned by the Power to which they appeal. She rejects them, as she rejects the murderer, the thief, and the adulterer. They can all say, "Cosmic nature made us what we are." "Cosmic nature" answers by destroying them.

Or perhaps we must say, "cosmic nature" does not continue longer to oppose their self-destructiveness.

"Then you give up the problem and confess yourselves beaten by it at the outset." Scarcely. Or, at all events, not in our sense of the term. A "problem" is "something to be *done*." Our "problem" is to believe reasonably in a good God. We contend that cosmic nature impels us to do this, rewards us if we do it, and punishes us if we do not. This being so, sensible and reasonable people, who find it difficult to believe, ought not (as it seems to us) to lay the blame on nature or reason, but on some violation of nature and reason in themselves—or possibly on self-deception.

§ 12

Some may urge that the author, being at heart a believer in a personal God, has no right to use the word "evolution." A moment's thought will show the futility of such an objection. Why are we not to describe God as "evolving"? Phidias, having the idea of Athene in his mind, may be said to breathe it into ("inspire") the marble, or cause it to grow ("create") out of the marble, or roll it out of ("evolve") the marble. These are but metaphors presenting three aspects of the same thing. The reason for using the last, is, partly, that it is, just now, very much misused—as though this particular metaphor enabled us to explain the sculpture scientifically without postulating any Sculptor! Moreover, it is too good a word to be thrown away. "Evolve" is a corrective of "create." If the former has been used by the

heterodox so as to dispense with the Sculptor, the latter has been used by some of the orthodox, without reference to its original meaning,[1] so as to dispense with the marble, and its resistance, and its superfluity, and the need of time and tools.

i Before entering into details, it may be well to indicate the lines on which it is proposed to shew that the Evolver may intend Himself to be regarded by us (for the present) as having had, so to speak, "difficulties" with the marble from the beginning, or, if not "difficulties," at least such obstacles as present themselves even to the ideal sculptor, who manifests his art by overcoming them. What follows is but an illustration. But it may suggest how evolution may be "divine," and yet not only consistent, but connected, with disorder, suffering, and sin.

ii Imagine a number of incipient planets, in the process of birth, shot up from sun-volcanoes, and whirling off into space, further and further away from the centre of heat and light, proud of their new independence and of their onward motion, which indeed might seem a sort of free will.

If the planets conquer the sun's attraction and go on, they will go on for ever, receding into darkness and cold and the unreachable, and the end of their "free will" will not be life. If the sun's attraction conquers them at once, and they come back, there will be

[1] It is connected with "Ceres," and the Latin "cre-scere," "increase." It therefore originally meant "make to grow," or "beget," so that it does not imply creation from nothing

practically no "free will" and no birth. So far, what a bewildering spectacle of seeming disorder and fruitless force! What Wisdom can look on it and "see that it is good"?

But now, let us suppose that, by mutual attraction, the planets deflect one another's path so that their new lines of motion make an angle with the line of the sun's attraction. Straightway, an altogether different motion begins for them. The attraction of the parent sun combines with the initial motion of the child (deflected by the social attraction of his planetary brothers) so that the latter, instead of becoming a fugitive in the infinite, is converted into a citizen of the finite, revolving round the father; who continues to give his offspring light and warmth, spending himself that the children may gain, and giving from the store of his life that his children may transmit it to their children.

iii Does not such an illustration at least prepare us not to be surprised if we should find that, as in the solar parent, so in the planets and their children, if there is any life at all, it is given on the condition thus shadowed forth? That is to say, in no one thing is there any life that does not pass to that one thing from another; and, for the purposes of life, there must be a combination of motions, a conformation of individual to common or central action, of life to larger life, and, ultimately, of will to will.

Something must give of its life that another may receive. There is to be no life save through death, in the vegetable, the animal, or the super-animal world.

The fallen leaves replenish the earth that feeds the parent tree. The forest that is, dies for the forest that is to come. The vegetable world is also the food of the animal world. In the latter, the multitude are the direct sustenance of the few: but all animals alike, devouring or devoured, pass into the earth, that new life may be sustained. In the vegetable world, this absorption into the common life is automatic. In the animal world, it is involuntary; there is a will to escape from it, and it is a pain.

But, in the higher animals, along with the desire not to suffer and not to die, there appears, not only an individual willingness to suffer for the tribe, but also a parental willingness to endure suffering and sometimes death for their offspring, a desire so irresistible, and sometimes so apparently mechanical and indiscriminating, that we call it instinct. This, in the human world, appears as an affection, strong indeed, but capable of being resisted, and therefore not an instinct. Among beasts there is (practically) no infanticide; but there is also nothing equal to the patient and permanent love that binds parents to children in the human family. So, along with the "unnatural" custom of destroying the weakly or superfluous young, there emerges what we may call a "supernatural" affection for the young, even where they appear to be a drag on the family and on the tribe.

Thus, there is dimly shadowed forth the truth that all must, in some sense, die for others; that, the higher the life, the higher must be the willingness to die, in those who would obey the central Purpose, Plan, or

Logos, of things; and that, in the noblest of the "children's children," there will be none more like the Father than that Child who best recognises that it is the law of His existence to give His life for the world: "All things were made through the Logos, the Law of self-sacrifice, and without that Logos was not anything made. That which hath been made in that Logos was life."

CHAPTER II

THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

1 How to avoid a wrong conception of God

§ 1

When using words about God we are not so much attempting to define God as to feel our way towards communion with Him. Whatever we say of Him is true only in metaphor and by way of "correspondence": that is to say, our words are not the truth, but they are *correspondent* or *proportional* to the truth.[1]

[1] This thought will help to explain many religious phenomena. When the Buddha was addressing a multitude of diverse-speaking people, we are told that "each of the countless listeners thought that the sage was looking towards himself and was speaking to him in his own tongue, though the language used was Mâjadhi." In the same way, Clement of Alexandria explains the "gift of tongues" (described briefly and scarcely intelligibly in the Acts, but perfectly intelligible as we find it in St. Paul's Epistles): "There was one sound, but those who understood it heard many languages." The mystic Blake, being asked how he could have had an interview with Virgil, since the latter would speak Latin, replied, "It might have been Latin when it left Virgil's lips; but it was English when it reached my ears."

§ 2

To the blind man, sight may seem "a long finger." The deaf may describe hearing as "an eye that can see round corners and through thin walls." Both are wrong, as to facts; both right, so far as their notions "correspond" to facts.

So it is between us and God. In comparison with Him, Galileo was blind and Handel deaf. We shall never, while we live, attain to the truth about Him. We may attain to something that "corresponds" to the truth.

§ 3

Unless vivified by faith, even true words about God produce the effect of falsehood. Even when thus vivified, all words about God partake of the nature of falsehoods or half-truths.

i "God is Love," for example—what can be truer than that? Yet what a falsehood for a man wrapped up in himself, or incapable of pure love! And even for the best of us—owing to our poor, low interpretation of it—how partially and imperfectly true!

ii Yet on the steps of these half-truths, or half-falsehoods, we trust we shall ascend by degrees towards the truth as it is. Now, therefore, we proceed to consider the best conception of God.

What are to be called His supreme attributes? Some

think, and some even venture to say, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence.

This is the broad path that leads to idol-worship: it conducts us straight to a non-moral or possibly immoral being that has *no affinity with the Christian God*. The first means of avoiding false conceptions of God is to believe in the supremacy of the moral faculties over the physical faculties in man.

2 *An illustration from Four Dimensions*[1]

§ 1

We live in a world of three dimensions and find it hard to conceive of a world of four. But let us begin by imagining a world of (practically) two dimensions, in which all the inhabitants are thin Triangles, Squares, Pentagons, and other plane figures, so restricted in sight and motion that they cannot look out of, or rise or fall out of, their thin, flat universe. In such a Flatland, nothing would be visible but lines.

§ 2

Next, imagine a living Solid, looking down from a height on such a Flatland, and on the superficial figures —square, triangular, or otherwise—that constitute the homes of a city of Flatlanders and the bodies of the citizens.

[1] The author worked out the following conception in a little book called "Flatland," published in 1884.

He will see everything that is going on within every house and every Flatland body. The pulses, the throbbing of the heart, the changes in the brain that accompany the processes of thought—all will lie open to his view. He will be to them what some of them, perhaps, might be disposed to call the Eye of God. Yet he would not be a God. He would be simply a solid being looking at flat beings, a creature of three dimensions contemplating creatures of two.

§ 3

Now suppose the surface of Flatland, though impenetrable to Flatlanders, to be of the nature of a watery superficies, penetrable by beings of three dimensions like ourselves; and imagine our Solid (which we will call a Globe) descending vertically into a Flatland chamber. It would be as when a ball slowly falls straight down on the surface of still water and sinks below it.

When the Globe touches the surface of Flatland he will break the surface with a small circle scarcely bigger than a point. When he sinks lower, he will break it with a larger circle. The circle will increase till the Globe is plunged up to his middle. Then it will diminish till he sinks below the surface. Then it will vanish.

§ 4

Meantime what will the Flatlander see? A Solid he cannot see. But he can see the line of section made by

the Solid as it cuts the plane of Flatland; and this line will represent to him a mysterious Being that has first entered his room (although doors and windows were closed), has then expanded, then diminished, then vanished.

Probably enough, he will call it Angel, Ghost, God, or Demon. But it will be simply a common solid creature manifesting itself to flat creatures, a being of three dimensions manifesting itself to beings of two.

§ 5

Now try to conceive the existence of a world of one more dimension than ours, containing what we may call "four-dimensional" or "super-solid" inhabitants.

Speaking popularly, there would be a proportion, viz.:—As three dimensions are to two, so four would be to three. *What we are to Flatlanders, that the "Super-solids" would be to us.*

§ 6

A "Super-solid," then, would see what is inside our homes and our bodies. Taking note of the workings of our brains, he might consequently anticipate our thoughts. He could manifest himself to us in our closed chambers, entering, increasing, diminishing, vanishing, at will. He could see and penetrate to the centre of our globe. Nowhere, in earth or heaven or beneath the earth, could we flee from his presence.

He, then, would be to us what some among us might be disposed to call the All-seeing and Omnipresent God.

§ 7

But no Christian ought to be able—it is perhaps too much to say "*is* able"—to give the name of God to a Super-solid, who may perhaps be a wholly despicable creature, an escaped convict from the four-dimensional land.

The followers of Christ ought to feel that a good Flatlander is more like God than a bad Super-solid, and that there is nothing essentially divine in being able to see the centres of all the stars in all the solar systems like dots on a sheet of paper.

§ 8

This illustration from four dimensions, suggesting other illustrations derivable from mathematics, may serve a double purpose in our present investigation.

On the one hand it may lead us to vaster views of possible circumstances and existences; on the other hand it may teach us that the conception of such possibilities cannot, by any direct path, bring us closer to God. Mathematics may help us to measure and weigh the planets, to discover the materials of which they are composed, to extract light and warmth from the motion of water and to dominate the material universe; but even if by these means we could mount up to Mars or hold converse with the inhabitants of Jupiter or Saturn, we should be no nearer to the divine Throne, except so far as these new experiences might develop in us modesty, respect for facts, a deeper reverence for order and

harmony, and a mind more open to new observations and to fresh inferences from old truths.

3 The highest conception of God

§ 1

Visible and audible harmonies are good, but it is the belief of Christians that the invisible and inaudible harmony of mind and soul is better. This harmony is represented to us by what we call moral goodness, and we assert the highest conception of God to be that of a moral being.

i Human morality may be classified under different titles, e.g. justice, temperance, courage, self-control, self-denial, affection. All these imply, at their best, some exercise of reason and of judgment. Without judgment, justice would be impossible, affection might be foolish indulgence: and so of the rest.

ii Our Lord inculcates the doctrine of the Pentateuch, that we are to love God "with," or rather "from," our "heart," "soul," "mind," and "strength." He seems to mean that the love of God is to be built up in man by physical action and habit, by the intellect, and by the animal life, as well as by the "heart." All these elements go to make what we call "character," that is to say, the impress that distinguishes one man from another and men from beasts; and all these—so

Christ's doctrine proclaims—must combine to receive that divine stamp which is called "the image of God" wherein man was created.

iii Hence the Old Testament is truly said to convey God's message about Himself "in many portions and in many manners," speaking through men of action as well as men of words, through shepherds, soldiers, judges, kings, prophets, psalmists, scribes, men and women suffering and rejoicing in private homes. All these are imperfect, some are what we should call bad. So, there are imperfections and things bad and good in the world: but through that, too, as through the Book, there come to us indirect messages about God which we take in, we scarcely know how.

We are taught, as it were, in an illogical circle. We learn to love the divine Order by knowing it, and to know it by loving it, and both to know and love it by living in it. And yet, without knowledge and love, to live in it is beyond our power.

iv The heart is the chief agent in leading us to this knowledge. If a man set before himself the good of others and inflame himself with charity, says the *Advancement of Learning*, it will teach him more than all the doctrine of morality can do. The vitalizing spark of love quickens the least intellectual to the deepest facts and laws of human nature. No one that is alive to these can be called, in any proper sense of the term, "a fool." There is no person or thing of which it may be more truly said than of God, as the

personification of the highest moral order, that to love Him is "a liberal education."

§ 2

If all our faculties are needed to approximate to God, and if all words are inadequate to describe or define God, a single word must be still less adequate. Yet a single word often penetrates the heart where groups of words remain on the surface. So, using single words and remembering that we use them metaphorically, we may speak of God as Love, or as a Father.

§ 3

The figures of speech above-mentioned are but two out of many. We might also describe God as a Shield, a Rock, a Friend, a Man of War; or as Truth, Life, Breath, Word, Light, Warmth, the Sun, Heaven, Earth, Air; or as Food, Bread, Wine, Water, Blood; or as Justice, Mercy, Wisdom; or as Soul, Mind, Thought, Spirit; or as Peace, War, harmonious Motion, or perfect Rest.

All these are metaphors, or, at best, inadequacies; but all contain truth and help us toward higher truth

§ 4

The reason why Christians prefer especially to call God "our Father in heaven" will be seen hereafter. But it must be said at once that they are taught not to regard that name as sufficient.

i "The Father" expresses wise, just, providential love in one who is vastly superior to those who are the objects of that love.

ii But is there nothing divine, also, in the love of children for parents?

Certainly there is. Then—however paradoxical it may seem—the *complete* God, so to speak, is revealed to us as including not only the attribute of paternal but also that of filial love. Such love as this is submissive, patient, trustful, devoted.

iii Accordingly—subordinating the notion of omnipotence—Christians worship God not only as the Father but also as the Son, and this though they confess that the Son, incarnate upon earth,[1] "*learned obedience* through the things that He suffered."

4 *The doctrine of the Spirit*

§ 1

But not even the Father and the Son together suffice to complete our best conception of God.

i Fathers we know, and sons we know: we need to add something about which we cannot quite so readily say, "We are familiar with this: we know all about it."

[1] Hebr. v. 8.

God is not a man. Unless we bear this in mind we are constantly in danger of making a god in our image.

ii The first of the Johannine Epistles says "God is Love." This includes—beside parental, filial, and friendly relations—the relation of husband to wife, which in the Old Testament is regarded as illustrating the relation between Jehovah and Israel, and in the New Testament the relation between Christ and the Church. It also includes the relation of wife to husband.

iii But the word "relation" leads us to ask whether there is not something still more inclusive and adapted to the vastness of the conception to which we are reaching forward—that of a Being the same yet not the same, standing in a fixed relation to all that is, yet rhythmically proportioned to the varying individuality of every single thing that changes in a changing universe.

iv We need some word to express also that which creates universal order, dispensing life to all things capable of living; that which binds groups of things together with such a unity that each whole works like a body with many members; that which from lifeless letters creates living words, from words living sentences, from sentences living representations of harmonious thought; that which makes sounds grow into music, patches of colour into pictures, blocks of stone into breathing forms, two or three into a family, families into a city, cities into a nation, nations into a church.

§ 2

"Law," "Order," "Harmony," suggest themselves as fit names. But none of these convey that notion of *life* (as well as order) which we desire to include.

i How could men express the life-giving principle of the Universe? Starting from their own physical life, they found the most obvious distinction between themselves and the non-animal world to be that they had, what stones and vegetables had not, *anima*, that is to say, "breath." "Breath" was the sign or token of the life of their body, or visible self. It was an easy, though illogical, step forward to say, "The life of our body *is* the breath." The next step was to represent the life of the invisible self by the same word, namely "breath." This the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans accordingly did. We do it too. Only, to distinguish the literal from the metaphorical "breath," we call the latter by a word of Latin derivation "spirit (spiritus)."

ii People who act as one man are said to be "animated" (another word for "inspired," for both words contain the notion of "breathing") "by one *spirit*." The "spirit" of a departed leader is said to "animate" his followers. A "spirit" of mutual understanding, fellow-feeling, and goodwill, is said to "breathe" in a united family. In a secondary sense, the metaphor is applied, not only to persons, but also to words and works. A work of art, when it is felt to be truly

"original," that is to say, fresh from the divine *origin* of harmonious life, is said to be "inspired," i.e. possessed with a "spirit." It is assumed that the "spirit" is one of beauty and order.

iii This conception of the creative life-giving Power as a Spirit is found in the very beginning of the Old Testament where the earth is described as at first without form and void, and the Spirit of God as "brooding upon the face of the waters." Adopted by Jesus, emphasized by St. Paul, and developed by the Fourth Gospel, it is accepted by us as conveying the third aspect, or character, in which we worship God.

iv "The Spirit" expresses for us the relationship of the Father to men, of the Son to men, of the Father to the Son, and of the Son to the Father. Hence—speaking, of course, in a figure—we do not describe the Spirit as "begotten" by the Father, but prefer to regard it as "coming forth," or as "proceeding," from the Father and the Son. The Spirit of Love does, as a fact, "come forth" to our hearts as a result of our recognition of the true relation between the Father and the Son. "Coming forth" seems also to express the idea of that relationship of unity and harmony, which we realize in men when we speak of their being "inspired by one spirit," or of a spirit "passing from a leader to his followers," or of men "acting in one spirit." We do not know demonstratively whence the Spirit comes, or whither it goes; but conceiving it as being in ever vitalizing motion, and having regard to our own

experience of its coming to us, we speak of it as thus "proceeding."

v The "Holy Spirit," in the New Testament, is habitually associated with the words "fellowship" or "communion." This agrees with the conception of it as representing a relationship, and as "proceeding" from whatever originates the relationship. A "spirit," in itself, may mean a solitary Being. But the Holy Spirit that we worship is never to be regarded as alone, but always as uniting more than one in one, and as creating rest out of motion, or, in other words, peace out of "proceeding."

5 *The doctrine of the Trinity*

§ 1

The Latin word for "a character" is *persona*. To "impersonate" Hamlet is to act the "character" of Hamlet. From this word the English language has derived the name of "person," applied to the three "characters" of the One God. Technical theologians speak of worshipping the One God in Three Persons, the Trinity in the Unity, or the Unity in the Trinity.

§ 2

It is easy to conceive of the Father and the Son as being "persons" in the ordinary sense, absolutely united

in a unity of will. It is less easy to conceive of the Spirit as being in any sense a "person."

§ 3

This will always remain a mystery, and it is not unnatural that many, who chafe at mystery, reject the doctrine of the Trinity.

They urge (i) that such a doctrine has existed in other religions; (ii) that it suggests to the ordinary mind something not moral or spiritual but of the nature of an arithmetical puzzle; (iii) that it has tended rather to controversy than to edification; (iv) that it is worse than mysterious because it is provokingly self-contradictory; (v) that there is no sufficient evidence that it was a part of the earliest Christian belief.

i But the fact that it has existed in other religions may point to its being an integral part of natural religion.

ii If it has been too often treated non-morally, so has the doctrine of the Holy Communion. But both may have a moral bearing. This may be only one more reason for taking special care to treat both doctrines morally.

iii The same answer applies to the controversial perversions of this doctrine. People have been burned for heterodox views of the Trinity. So they have for heterodox views of the Holy Communion. But it does

not follow that we should dispense with either: *Corruptio optimi pessima.*

iv The Athanasian Creed certainly does not do justice to the doctrine of the Trinity and ought not to be taken as adequately representing it. But the recognition of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, if studied in the New Testament—where the words "trinity," "person," and "substance" do not occur in connection with it—will not be found self-contradictory in any provocative sense. To say that "we are in Christ and Christ in us," is, literally speaking, self-contradictory, but not provocative. Regarded spiritually it is not even self-contradictory. So it may be found with the doctrine of the Trinity when fairly studied.

v If Christ assumed this doctrine in some form, as seems probable, and if St. Paul's Epistles and the Fourth Gospel teach it, that—for those who understand what "evidence" means in the region we are now traversing—is strong "evidence" in its favour.

For we are not now speaking of occurrences and historical facts, but of *the best thoughts and the best expressions, concerning the unknowable and inexpressible nature of God.* We should justify our deferring to an artistic genius about a matter of art, "because of his insight." So, about matters of religion, we ought to defer to those who have corresponding "insight" in the region of spiritual thought.

§ 4

And on the other side, recurring to our old argument from experience of that which "works," we may fairly claim that the doctrine of the all-pervading Spirit does perceptibly enlarge and purify our conceptions both of God and man.

Jesus called the Spirit man's Paraclete, that is to say, *The Friend in need.* He also implied that this Friend was His representative, His second self. As soon as we take this in, and understand that it is the Spirit of Love and Self-sacrifice, all doctrine about the Spirit is raised above the region of metaphysical controversy, at the same time broadening our intellectual view of spiritual things.

"When we do what is morally right, we are in the Spirit; when we do what is wrong, we are outside the Spirit"—such a doctrine as this is not metaphysical but moral. "We are in the Spirit, the Spirit in us; the Spirit reveals the Father to us and carries up our prayers to the Father. Yet the Father is in us too, and we in the Father:"—how admirably calculated is such language as this to beat down our obstinate materialistic prejudice that God is a God of places and times! And does it not also suggest that our own natures, being in this mysterious relation to the divine nature, may partake of similar mystery?[1]

[1] Compare what was said above (Chap. i. 3) about the human will revealed as (1) "I act," (2) "I think," (3) "I am," i.e. (1) Power, (2) Thought (Logos), (3) Unity (of the many faculties in the one person).

ii Again, the notion that this all-pervading Spirit, whom we hardly know whether to call male or female or neither, and as to the nature of whose personality we have so vague and dim a conjecture, does nevertheless sympathize with us ("groan," as the Apostle says, with our groanings on earth) and yet is all the while with the Father above in heaven—does not this give to our conception of God a quasi-pantheistic tinge that is not really pantheistic but only spiritual, permeating all visible nature, and making all the world of sense around us bear witness to a harmony that is beyond the reach of sense?

iii "But," it may be urged, "are not the Father and the Son both Spirits, so that there would seem to be no need of a third Spirit? Or are we to say there are three Spirits?"

The answer is, that the Father and the Son, when regarded as Spirits, lose that special aspect of personality which we should desire to preserve for those names, as compared with the special aspect of quasi-impersonality implied in the Spirit. We are to think of the Father and the Son anthropomorphically, as united in, or related to, one another, in virtue of a Spirit of divine Order (of which the highest anthropomorphic expression is Love). We are to think of the Spirit non-anthropomorphically, as all-present, all-including, all-immanent, all-moving, all-inspiring, all-vitalizing, quasi-impersonal—the spiritual air in which all things live and move and have their being.[1]

[1] The Athanasian Creed declares that the Father and the Son and the Spirit are each "God" and "Lord," and yet there are "not

§ 5

Some apologists for this doctrine lay stress on natural analogies, as, for example, on the triply composite nature of a ray of light and of a musical chord.

i Both are certainly suggestive, and the latter all the more because musical harmony appears to have been unknown to Greece and Rome, a gift of God to Christian nations. The ancient music, like that of birds, may have been inexpressibly melodious; but, when compared with the new music, it seems relatively incomplete.

ii But all such illustrations, when derived from details *selected by us*, are open to objections drawn from details *selected by others*.

For example, the heterodox might urge that the triple harmony of the first, third, and fifth, is not so full and satisfying as the quadruple harmony formed by adding the first note of the octave above. To this, again, the orthodox might rejoin that this additional note is itself a part of a new superior Trinity, and that this encroach-

three Gods" or "three Lords," but one God and one Lord. Why does it not go on to say that the three Persons are each "Spirit?" The author ought to have done so, consistently; but perhaps he felt that to call the Father or the Son by the name "Spirit" would be to de-personify them. The fourth Gospel teaches us that "God is a Spirit," but not that the Father is a Spirit (2 Cor. iii., 17, "the Lord is the Spirit," is of doubtful interpretation). It is perhaps on this account that the Athanasian Creed confines itself to denying that there are "three Holy Spirits," and does not assert that each Person is "Spirit."

ment of the lower scale on the higher indicates that our idea of the Trinity is to be perpetually rising. But is not all this too thin and fanciful for so serious a subject?

iii The really important arguments for the doctrine of the Spirit are, first, that it is implied by Christ and taught by St. Paul's Epistles and the Fourth Gospel; secondly, that it prepares the way for higher and higher conceptions of God and is especially adapted to the spiritual needs of a scientific age.

§ 6

Another way of looking at the doctrine of the Trinity is suggested by the following considerations.

i The Universe may be described, relatively to each one of us, as consisting of two parts, namely the "I" and the "not-I." The "I," or human mind, is the "subject," contemplating the "not-I," which is the "object." When the "I" so contemplates the "not-I" that its perceptions are conformed to a certain harmonious order, we are in the habit of saying that it has attained "the truth."

This result we may describe in various metaphors: (1) the mind, being wedded to the external universe, brings forth truth: or (2) the mind is wedded to the universe in the temple of truth: or (3) the magnet of truth unites the mind and the universe: and many others.

ii Now, when we apply this analogy to the divine Mind, we cannot conceive of *that* as contemplating or knowing *from a distance*. It at once *knows* and *permeates*. *Knowing* and *being* are therefore united in the divine Mind, i.e. in God. Now *knowing*—as being an act, or offspring, of the divine Mind—may be called the Logos, or Reason, or Word, or Son, of God. Again, *being*—that is to say, the breath, or life, of the divine Mind—may be called the Spirit of God. Hence we may say that the Son and the Spirit are united in God the Originator or Father.

iii To different people different aspects of truth commend themselves: but to most believers the world of affection will seem to afford better analogies than the world of metaphysics for the illustration of the best conception of the divine nature.

The one essential point is to remember that all metaphors about God are but metaphors. It is also desirable to select such metaphors as belong to the world of our natural and homely experience, so that they may be continually tested, revised, and adapted to our growth by growing with all of us.

CHAPTER III

AXIOMS AND CAUTIONS

1 Axioms

BEFORE describing the evidence on which Christian faith is based, it will be well to state some of its more important axioms.

§ 1

The things that are seen are temporal, i.e. not real in the highest sense; the things that are not seen are eternal, i.e. divinely real.

Hence we use the word "real," or "objective," in two senses, one material, the other spiritual.

i Materially, we call things "objective" when they impress the senses similarly in similar circumstances.

ii Spiritually, we attribute reality or objectiveness to those thoughts, ideas, or visions, which commend themselves to the spiritual sense of the best and purest, and ultimately, through them, to the conscience of others,

with the result of furthering men's moral and general development.

iii The vision of God seen by Isaiah was "real," and the vision of Jesus seen by St. Paul was "real"; but we know that the latter (and we have every reason to believe that the former) was not seen, and could not have been seen, by unsympathetic bystanders. Neither vision, therefore, was materially "real," but only spiritually.

§ 2

There is such a thing as evil, and it is to be regarded as springing from an "adversary," or from man under the influence of an "adversary," not from God.

§ 3

There is such a thing as forgiveness of sins, and it is a moral and spiritual act. It implies, in the forgiver, a voluntary bearing of a spiritual burden, a spiritual sacrifice; in the forgiven, faith.

§ 4

Taking love, fatherhood, forgiveness, and justice, at their best, as discernible in men, we say that God's love and fatherhood are like human love and fatherhood, God's forgiveness like human forgiveness, God's justice like human justice.

If we denied this, there would be no revelation for us in the words "God is love," "God is our Father." We should be in the position of the philosopher who said that "God is no more represented by our conception of Him than the dog-star by a dog."

§ 5

We cannot know God without loving Him.

Eternal life is "knowing God," i.e. "being in spiritual communion with God"—not knowing Him merely intellectually or metaphysically, but *with all our being*. In the Fourth Gospel "know" is often used where the modern equivalent would be "recognize with the whole of our nature" or "feel."

i If God is independent of place and time, the highest communion with Him and knowledge of Him would appear to be similarly independent; and we are to regard "eternal life" as ultimately independent of existence in place and time.

ii Hence there is no spiritual inconsistency in the literally self-contradictory expressions of the New Testament that we are "in Christ," yet Christ "in us"; that we are "in the Spirit," yet the Spirit "in us."

2 Cautions

§ 1

Christians make needless difficulties by professing to *know* in provinces where knowledge is impossible.

i How, for example, can we "know" that we did not pre-exist before our present existence?[1] If the Son of God thus pre-existed, why not the inferior children of God?

ii How do we "know" that irrational animals may not have (as Bishop Butler believed them to have) a future existence? Is there much more difficulty in conceiving some future existence for a faithful dog than for a born idiot, or a still-born child, or a babe whose life is measured by minutes?

iii Does not analogy lead us to believe that, as in the visible, so in the invisible world, evolution goes on "throughout the ages of ages"?

[1] The question of Christ's disciples (John ix. 2), "Who did sin, *this man* or his parents, that he should be *born blind*?" certainly assumes their belief in the possibility of sin in the womb or before birth. Christ's answer does not rebuke the assumption.

§ 2

The argument against the doctrine of pre-existence, as applied to men, is, that it does not "work"; it tends to destroy personal responsibility.

But so, at first sight, does the doctrine, or law, of heredity. Yet heredity is a fact. May not a series of pre-existences be an analogous fact? A time may come when belief in heredity will have, in all minds, that strong restraining moral tendency which it already has in the more enlightened and thoughtful. May it not be the same with belief in some kind of metempsychosis?

However, we are not urging metempsychosis as a doctrine, but only recommending Christians to keep their minds open on such points.

§ 3

Again, we do not "know" whether we have any separable existences such as we call soul and spirit. Nor do we "know" the nature of the 'I.' As for attempting to prove that the 'I' exists, such attempts—in these days—are childish. In "*Cogito*, ergo *sum*," the "Cogito" assumes the "ego," and cannot be translated into English without revealing that assumption. Yet in assuming the "ego" we assume its existence—the very thing to be proved.

i The "I" may have an existence that has different "aspects," or different "tendencies"—we speak in a figure—of which one may be soul, and the other, spirit.

Or the "I" may be a succession of shocks, or a continuous thrill. It may be like the ripple of a stream, or the melody from a lyre.

ii All this is nothing to us. The one thing needful to believe, is that the "I" is "known by God," that is to say, recognized in the circle of God's family, and brought into eternal relationship with them. This we cannot "know," but we can most devoutly and confidently *believe*.

§ 4

If we do not "know" whether we have an entity called a spirit, still less do we "know" where it is.

Supposing it to be capable of being limited to locality, the spirit might lodge in the whole of our body; or in any part; or in a point, say, seven inches above our heads; or below our feet; or in the moon, or in Saturn. Of all this we "know" nothing. Some of us may feel that it is hardly possible, or at present desirable, to know anything.

§ 5

Yet, if a theory is to be suggested, we might suggest that the human spirit may be of the nature of *active thought*, such as is implied in the term Logos.

i As thoughts are real, when they are in the world of true ideas, or in "that which *is*," so are spirits, when they are in God.

ii The spirit-world may be a world, or sea, of spirit-waves, in which nothing affects one spirit that does not affect all the rest. This fluent spiritual region may have its laws of forces, of conservation of energy, of action and reaction, and of gravitation. Every phenomenon in the material world may be simultaneous with, influenced by, and influencing, some corresponding reality in the spiritual world.

§ 6

As regards the details of future existence, personal identity, and mutual recognition in the life to come, we are content to trust much, while "knowing" nothing.

i What constitutes the "individuality" or personality of a dead friend relatively to us? By what means do we keep him in our hearts? We can give but a very rough and disjointed account of the process:—a number of mental photographs and phonographs which we took of him now and then in occasional flashes of insight while he lived; a word here, a deed there, sometimes only a glance or gesture, the "I act" giving us a glimpse of the "I think," and the "I think" gradually impressing upon us the stamp of the "I am," that is, the character, person, or personal identity: then, after death, a mysterious hand seems to reach forth from beyond the grave to complete the picture, effacing what is petty and superfluous and deepening the essential lines: and thus, the final result, what Shakespeare calls "the idea" of the dead, creeping into "our study of imagination."

ii But if such a result can be achieved by human minds, is it difficult to conceive of a similar but vaster process constantly going on in the Mind of the All-knowing and All-loving, so that the character or personality of each of the blessed dead is automatically engraved in perfect truth upon the living Home of the spirits of all flesh? Thus, what we call the "idea," or "idealized conception," of the departed, may be the real person, the man as he lives eternally in God. And as, in our own hearts, during moments of special insight and peace, thought seems to harmonize with thought, working to some creative end, so may it be between spirit and spirit in the ages of ages to come. The communion of saints may be like a communion of personified thoughts.

iii To some, all this may appear but a sorry substitute for the friend of flesh and blood whose hand can be pressed, and whose thoughts taken in from the face by a single glance of intuition. "Ideas," they may say with George Eliot, "are often poor ghosts."

They were so, till the Image, or Ideal, or Idea, of man, having first taken flesh, and then passed through death, sent to us that second Idea, which He called His second self, or "The Friend in need." Since that time, the "ideas" or "ideals" of the departed ought not to appear "poor ghosts" to Christians. However, if they do so appear, let such objectors cling to their old faith in flesh and blood recognition hereafter—provided that the effort does not impair their faith in recognition itself. The essential point is to believe that the recognition will

be real, and as much beyond our hopes as the ways of God are above the ways of men.

§ 7

Once more, when we are confronted by the rise and fall of nations, the extermination of savage tribes, and all the mysterious problems presented by the awful influence of man on man for evil, besides taking comfort from considering that God's work is continued through "the ages of ages," may we not ask ourselves whether we have grasped the meaning of what we may call (paradoxically) national or social individuality?

i A nation is a tree in which the individuals are leaves. Every leaf has an individuality of its own, though stamped with the common character. And the sun and wind and rain, visiting each individual leaf, according to fixed laws, influence the tree through the leaf and the leaf through the tree and each leaf individually, with an individual adaptation to its structure, so that each lives a life of its own till each falls to the ground, absorbed into the earth, and thence into the being of the whole tree, to issue forth again in new leafage.

ii Something of the kind may occur in nations; and so, in some sense at present ungrasped by us, St. Paul may be right in saying "All Israel shall be saved."

The analogy is, of course, not complete. The invisible influence of a dead hero is indeed absorbed

into the life of his nation, with results patent to all in the increase of national vigour: and we speak of him as living in the hearts and memories of his countrymen. But there is this difference. In the tree, all leaves alike give their lives for the parent. In the nation, "many are called, but few are chosen." Common men die, but only those who have a touch of the heroic can[1] "lay down their lives" for the nation and "take them again" in the nation's heart. Nevertheless, weighing the similarities against the dissimilarities, we may well feel that we have still something to learn from the thought of the Vine of Israel, originated by the Hebrew Prophets, adopted by the Apostles, and, if we may trust the fourth Gospel, emphasized by our Lord Himself.

§ 8

Again, as to the final judgment, do we not sometimes bewilder ourselves by interpreting too narrowly and literally the figurative descriptions of it given in the Bible?

i Judgment means mental or spiritual separation of good from evil. The ideal judgment is not that which is merely pronounced by an external judge, but that which passes into the heart of the judged, compelling the latter to see his evil, and to contrast it with the good in him that might have been, and to pronounce his own condemnation and punishment.

[1] John x. 18.

ii Applying this thought to our future life, ought we not to believe that our future judgment will be the just spiritual result of all our previous spiritual experiences?

As naturally and inevitably as a picture grows from the artist's brush, even so may our life hereafter depend on the impressions we have left on the spiritual world. If the spiritual world is the mind of God, and if God's children are *in* God, in His mind, is it hard to imagine how prayers to the Father in heaven, and kindnesses to His children on earth, may be the fore-ordained means by which the immortal picture is to be painted, so that the artist is to live in his work? The canvas is "reality" or "the divine Essence"; and none but the honest, truthful, and righteous can touch it. Those who are in contact with the canvas are painting a picture. Those who are not, are painting the air.

iii If this be so, how clear and how awful becomes Christ's teaching about prayer! How idle to measure prayer by the page, or by the hour! How manifestly forcible becomes the force of trust or faith, and how manifest the deadness of what St. Paul calls "dead works"!

§ 9

Christian faith regards the material world in all its stages as being gradually conformed by the Eternal Word of God to the Eternal Will. Hence we are bound to a devout recognition of all truth of fact,

historical or pre-historical. Facts are revelations from God about the divine Will and the processes of the divine Word fulfilling that Will. Whoever misrepresents facts, misrepresents God.

i The human, the animal, the vegetable and the inanimate world, represent, though imperfectly, "thoughts of God." So far as they do this, they partake of the nature of eternal reality.

ii Whatever has life, says St. Paul, was "made subject," for a time, "to vanity," i.e. to corruption and death. But we dimly see, throughout the ages, a endency towards higher and higher forms of life. In he resurrection of Christ perceiving this tendency more clearly revealed, we are helped to believe that the goal of eternal life, i.e. communion with God and conformity to His Will, cannot but be ultimately reached.

iii Regarded thus, Christianity may be called a "natural religion." Non-human nature shews a preparation for it; human nature testifies to it; Christ exhibits it; the Church is to fulfil it.

§ 10

Such a religion as this does not bind us to an idle optimism. Christians are not asked to believe that the world is the best possible; nor that God's kingdom is as yet come; nor that evil is explained, or to be explained, by calling it "good in the wrong place"; nor that men were sent here to be, in the ordinary

sense of the term, happy; nor that the many will rapidly attain even that development which is attainable by them.

On the contrary, we may believe that, as the good grows, so will the evil. We may expect, and perhaps at no distant time, "judgments" (or, to use the Greek term, *crises*) in which the conflict between Light and Darkness will be fought out, and Light may, for the time, appear to fail.

Christians are bound to believe that the Light will ultimately conquer; but this does not excuse them from practically realizing that every human being is called on to contribute to the conquest. To quote our forefathers, our first thought may be "God mend all!" our second, "Yes, but we must help Him to mend it."

§ 11

The last and not least needed caution is that, before attempting to mend God's world on a large scale in others, we must consider how far it needs mending, and what we have done to mend it, in ourselves. Great things are to be studied in the light of small things and the external Macrocosm in the light of the internal Microcosm.

Such a comparison may keep us from the extremes of complacency and despair. In our youth, some of us thought, perhaps, that we could do good and great things rapidly for mankind, and that the world was at our disposal, like Pistol's oyster, ready to be opened by our philanthropic sword: yet we gave little thought to our difficulty in doing good and small things slowly

for our own disorderly and rebellious hearts. So, we were foolish optimists. Later on, we realized that the world was not so easily reformable, and that the great reformers were men out of our star, men who, to speak in hyperbole, had a genius for laying down their lives for mankind and taking them again; and then perhaps we became pessimists, intensely pessimistic about the world, and moderately pessimistic about ourselves.

But if from the first we had studied the Macrocosm and the Microcosm together, we might have been saved from optimism and from pessimism about both. The right course is to see the evil as very evil and the good as very good, and to foresee the very evil ultimately swallowed up in the very good.

BOOK II

EVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

THE EVOLUTION OF MAN

1 Non-human Nature

§ 1

Following our plan of regarding Christianity as a religion of the Eternal Word "through whom the ages were made," we proceed to ask what may be learned about it from the action of the Word in the Evolution of the preparatory ages.

§ 2

We begin by contemplating our world before it was the home of life. The gradual formation of the planet, and its movements in the solar system, suggest order, sometimes underlying, or resulting from, apparent disorder; power, beauty, harmony, sometimes broken by apparent, but ultimately harmonized, conflict; and Law universally obeyed without the possibility of disobedience. Inability to disobey leaves no room for will, and therefore none for morality.

§ 3

In the rise of vegetable life there enters a superficial appearance of will, and of consequent conflict. The children of the vegetable world live, struggle for life with each other, and die. Many perish, few survive. All die at last, and their death feeds the life of their successors. But still we find the same universal inability to disobey, and consequently no morality or immorality: struggle everywhere, but nowhere immoral, simply non-moral.

§ 4

In the animal but non-human world there arises a fiercer, though more restricted, struggle.

i Domestic conflict ceases; but the conflict between races becomes, if we may so say, less non-moral. Not that it is immoral as yet. But a dark anticipation of immorality settles on the face of life. The animal world seems divided into the preying and the preyed-on. Nature, like a sportsman, gives the prey a chance—swiftness or cunning as a means of escaping or evading ferocity and force: but ferocity and force seem to have the best of it. Pain and fear create an instinct of distrust.

Among gregarious animals, a sense of encumbrance sometimes causes the healthy to destroy the weak or wounded in their own herd. Among the carnivora, the lust of the chase, and the constant exercise

of the power of inflicting pain, occasionally indicate what in men we should call diabolical cruelty. Some creatures seem to shed blood for the pleasure of shedding it; some few, to take a pleasure in torture.

ii Yet there are glimpses of compensation. For the weak, the pain of dying is brief and unforeseen. The lion dies by inches, condemned to mean and miserable shifts for prolonging existence.

And the joys of animal life, as a whole, seem to predominate over the pains. At least, left to themselves, wild creatures seldom or never destroy themselves. They appear to take a pleasure in living. Their young leap and frolic in exuberance of life. The older find pleasure in food and sexual passion, and an interest in the care of the young. A power that binds parents to offspring, and makes the former willing to undergo labour and peril in feeding and protecting the latter, introduces in all creatures something that shadows forth self-sacrifice. In gregarious creatures one discerns the germ of public spirit.

§ 5

Thus, in animal nature, there seem to be emerging two new opposite tendencies, one to morality, the other to immorality; and these represent what appear to be increasing violations of the old Law of "inability to disobey." The young can disobey the warning call of the parents; the individual can disobey the promptings suggested by the interests of the herd.

With disobeying comes the power of *real* obeying, which did not exist till disobedience entered the world. The power to obey or disobey indicates something that approaches to will.

i As in the vegetable world, so in the animal, what we are disposed to call the "waste" of life, though not so manifest as before, appears stupendous. But now, more clearly, it is perceived that the "waste" was not "mere waste." The struggle and death of individuals contribute to the improvement of the type.

ii In some animals (the beaver, the ant, the bee) and especially in birds, there appear complex actions, together with powers and methods of re-arranging external things *so as to* (and perhaps *in order to*) produce definite results. Some of these powers and methods suggest forethought and reason, but reason of a mechanical kind, not generally adapted to varying circumstances, so that it is called "instinct," not "reason." Yet it seems a kind of kindred precursor of reason.

2 *Human Nature*

§ 1

At last man appears on the battle-field, pre-historic man: inferior to most of the beasts in bodily weapons, but endowed with a hand that gives him superior

powers of re-arranging external things; with a voice capable of varied, articulate, and regular utterance; and with an instinct of adaptation of means to ends so versatile that it can no longer be called instinct. It accompanies a development of brain unknown in the lower animals. It includes fore-thought, after-thought, and better-thought (i.e. second or third thoughts correcting, or completing, first or second thoughts). This we call "reason."

§ 2

Man was from the first a fighting animal, often on the defensive. Waging war (not always successfully) against animals superior to himself in strength, instinctive action, and narrow cunning, and inferior to himself only in the power of re-arranging materials and in that broader and more versatile cunning which was the beginning of reason, man was forced to bend and turn his mind to changing circumstances, and to the ways and tactics of the animals against which he fought. This developed his faculty of attention, widened his reason, and forced him to cultivate his manual power of re-arrangement.

§ 3

Having fore-thought, man had before his mind the constant fear of being devoured by his superiors in bodily strength, the carnivora. Dwelling on their ferocity and their power of inflicting pain, he came not only to fear them, but, in a way, to *hate* them. So,

"hate"—scarcely existent before among the lower animals—now crept into the world. But it was the hate of what was regarded as "evil."

§ 4

Having fore-thought, human parents were forced to feel a keener fear for their offspring, which remained helpless far longer than the young of inferior creatures. In almost all animals strong parental affection was called forth wherever the young were helpless. But that was for the most part brief and of the nature of an instinctive obedience to law. Now, the animal attraction of parentage, greatly prolonged, intermixed with durable fears and hopes, and impressed on the mind by continuous acting and planning, began to assume the form of a permanent and reasonable affection, not without a touch of pity. So, "love" came into the world.

Philologists are not yet fully agreed as to the causes of language. But if, as seems possible, one of the first impulses to it sprang from the relations between parents and young children, it may be that the child, during that very period of prolonged helplessness when it seemed to be a drag on the family and the tribe, was in reality contributing (through its phonetic experiments adopted and adapted by the mother[1]) to that divine gift

[1] For example, in Greek, we learn from Aristophanes (*Clouds* 1383) that an Athenian baby "asked for *mamman*," if he wanted food. Now "mamme," in Greek, is used for a child's attempt to articulate "mother"; but in Latin the word means "(the mother's) *breast*." What is here suggested is, that the child's cry for the breast, caught up and interpreted by the mother, was used by her so as to become the basis of a number of other root words:—*μά-ει*

of articulate speech which is one of the chief causes of the superiority of man over the non-human world. If that was so, we may well say with the Psalmist, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength."

§ 5

The necessities of self-defence, as well as the helplessness of the young, made man from the beginning a tribal animal; and the interests of the tribe led to a reasonable gregariousness, in time to be called "public spirit" or "patriotism."

§ 6

Man found himself environed by external Powers, some for the most part friendly, some variable—sun, clouds, frost, rain, snow, taking their own courses, beneficent or maleficent; and besides these, some hostile,

(ma-ei) "he wants (me)," μα-σ-τός (ma-s-tos) "the breast," μα-σ-τ-εύει (ma-s-t-euei) "he is feeling after, or seeking," μα-τ-ήρ (ma-t-eer, Lat. ma-t-er) "mo-th-er." This is also the root of "meat" and of "mast" (the food of swine), and of a vast number of other words.

It is not, of course, denied that the out-door life of men contributed largely to language, as is testified by such words as "cuckoo" and "crow." But it may be doubted whether the excitement of hunting and fighting was so good a linguistic school as the primæval nursery. Action stops talking; the repression of action stimulates it. And it is possible that, when the first babe-signals had passed into the stage of a vocabulary recognized by the tribe, there might spring up a tendency in the father, as well as the mother, to consult the little oracle as to the right "signal" for this or that, as the Lord God is said to have brought the animals to Adam "to see what he would call them."

such as blasts, blights, plague-bringing breaths from the marshes, floods and fires, fierce whirlwinds, waterspouts, shakings of the earth, darkenings of the sun and moon.

Other Powers, sudden and unseen, like invisible beasts of prey, seemed sometimes to leap or creep into man, tormenting and devouring him: cramps, agues, palsies, and spasms. Or sometimes a Power made him not himself, ignorant of his family and fellow tribesmen, and no longer of service to them.

These Powers he could not slay like wild beasts. But might he not circumvent them as he circumvented the beasts? Or else, might he not conciliate them as he conciliated strong men and chiefs?

The night, bringing before the wakeful eye multitudes of moving lights unseen during the day, brought also before the visionary sense of the sleeper shapes of dreamland. Sometimes these took the semblances of the dead, who rose, as it seemed, to complain that their tribesmen had neglected them; and then, perhaps, plague followed, or defeat, or other disaster.

It seemed, then, that a dead man, or part of him, might still live, and complain, and be a Power, and avenge himself. How was his complaint to be appeased and his vengeance to be averted?

§ 7

To answer these questions, there arose Medicine-men, Wizards, Pontiffs, Priests. The name varied, but the thing was the same. These, by drugs, charms, music, and dances, or sometimes by counsels of wisdom, could drive out from the body the evil Powers, avert defeats,

plagues, and famines; and, when the sun or moon was darkened, it was their task sometimes to bring back light again by their incantations.

The art of these experts taught men how to conciliate some Powers and keep others friendly, by giving them names, to which they must needs respond when supplicated; and by satisfying them with acceptable sacrifices. Delivering their fellow-tribesmen from vague immediate terrors, the Medicine-men or Priests rose to honour and were encouraged to study and develop the Art of Religion.

By degrees, the Powers were recognized as having possessions that must not be touched by the Tribe. The beasts offered to them in sacrifice; the house, or temple, where they received these offerings; the priests, who slew their victims and who were devoted to their service—all these were set apart for the Powers. In other words, they were "holy."

§ 8

Judges had come already before Priests. In each tribe, chiefs and elders had laid down rules for dividing the prey taken in hunting and such other things as the Tribe held in common. What was thus "laid down" was "just" or "right"[1]; what was "not laid down" was "unjust" or "wrong." Where "justice" reigned, the tribe tended to prosper; where there was "injustice,"

[1] Θεσμός and *θέμις* ("law," "right") originally meant "laid down." Δίκη ("justice") originally meant "way," "usage," "custom."

there was disorder, and the tribe tended to fall to pieces and to perish. So, "justice" was found to be strong and came to be loved and esteemed beautiful, and "injustice" was hated.

i The rules that were "laid down" became "laws"; and the collection of "laws" became "Law."

"What is laid down" is a very poor and inadequate name. So were all names of invisible things, originally, being mere metaphors borrowed from the visible world. But if we ask, "laid down by *whom*?" and answer, "by the noblest spirits of the nation, by those who stood to the rest in the relation of gods," then we shall understand that "what is laid down" might from the first include what was "laid down" by the spirit of the purest "justice," for example, the debt of hospitality to the stranger and the suppliant, so that the word might soon receive the same noble associations that we ourselves now attach to the word "right," which originally meant simply "straight."

ii So, now, men had come to such a point, that they recognised that they must not always do what was best for themselves, but must have regard to what the Chiefs "laid down" (for this was "*right*") and to what the Priests taught (for this was "*holy*"). The former was the will of the Tribe, the latter was the will of the Powers: but the former, too, was felt to be in accord with the general will of the Powers, although it did not enter so much into detail as the latter.

§ 9

Man has now awakened to a knowledge that beasts have scarcely at all, the knowledge of a will that he regards as superior to his own. But he does not always do this will. To do it is sometimes painful. A voice within him says, "Do it"; but something else within him whispers, "Do not do it," and pulls him back.

i He feels divided against himself in a strange internal discord, the sound of which comes back to him in echoes that seem to tell of a similar discord in the outer world. Some Powers are fighting for him, others against him. Some Powers seem, like himself, wayward and inconsistent. The Earth, liberal to the cattle, will give man little without sore labour on his part, and what it gives as the price of his toil, it diminishes or destroys with weeds; or the Air assails it with blasts and blights. Weeds and blights and blasts were in existence before man awoke to the knowledge of good and evil; but he did not then regard them as curses, for he did not know what a curse meant. Now he understands a curse because he is beginning to understand a blessing.

ii But the blessing is not yet apparent. For the present, man's new knowledge of good and evil appears to have resulted in a "fall." He has been cast out of the Paradise of animal instinct and driven into a wilderness of forethought and anxiety, attention and memory, reflections and regrets, laborious inferences

and bewildering illusions; ever learning and never seeming to come to the knowledge of the truth.

iii The same Powers that exiled him have erected within his soul some mysterious barrier between him and his former region of comparatively restful innocence and ignorance. Like the flaming swords of the Cherubim that flashed darkness on the eyes of Adam as he turned back to look his last on the gates of Eden, so, for man, as he emerges from the animal, Reason and Conscience seem to send forth a light that, while guiding him towards his future, obscures his past. As the youth cannot recall the experiences of the cradle, so neither can man his stage of irrational existence. To return to his old Paradise he must be born again.

That perhaps may happen, in another sense than he as yet dreams of. Meantime, he has to turn his back upon the innocent past and to press forward into a hard world where innocence is no longer possible.

§ 10

Contrasting man with what man came from, some may feel tempted to say, with Mr. Huxley, at this point —where humanity and morality emerge together—that Evolution is beginning to reverse its processes, that the struggle for self seems giving place to the struggle for others, and that man will presently strive to "kick down the ladder" by which he mounted from the non-moral world; and that "human nature is the school of ethical virtue but non-human nature is the head-quarters of the enemy."

i But, if man "kicks down the ladder," will it not be because there have been causes at work from the beginning to *make* him kick it down? And, if we personify those causes and make one cause or group of causes an "enemy," is it not consistent to go further and call another cause or group of causes a "friend"?

Moreover, does it not savour of optimism to say —at least, as yet, and in the rudimentary stage at which we have arrived—that "human nature is the school of ethical virtue"? On the other hand, since "non-human nature" has caused—materialists would say, "*solely* caused"—"the rise of ethical virtue," is it not pessimistic to describe it as "the head-quarters of the enemy"?

ii It seems more scientific to say (as a working hypothesis) (1) that "the enemy" and "the friend" were at conflict from the beginning of cosmic force, but only skirmishing hitherto in non-human nature, now settling down to a pitched battle in the nature of man; (2) that the tactics of the hypothetical "enemy"[1] have

[1] On this difficult subject a friend writes: "Nor does the doctrine that *Evil is part of the Creator's machinery* for bringing about a higher good at all satisfy me. For our life, which is what *you* go by as well as I, Evil is not the servant or the material, but the Adversary. I cannot help suspecting, at the back of my mind, that it will appear that Evil has been so used; but yet the doctrine is one which it is necessary to keep out of our consciousness."

But I have nowhere said that evil is "part of *the Creator's machinery*." In such metaphors as those of the Sculptor and the marble, or the Overcomer of resistance, I have nowhere suggested that the Sculptor *makes* the superfluous marble, or the Overcomer the resistance. The phrase used here is "tactics" of an "enemy." My friend's dissent is really based on the fact that he cannot, in his

been, so far, most marvellously diverted, controlled, and subordinated to the plans and purposes of the hypothetical "friend."

heart, admit the existence of an Adversary so far as to use the word "tactics." He takes the Adversary to be an enemy "of straw." I do not; at least, not at present. Hence, I am able to believe with all my heart that the Friend is defeating, by utilizing, the "tactics" of the "enemy." The doctrine that ought to be kept at the "back of the mind" and "out of our consciousness," for the present, appears to me to be that of the Omnipotence of God combined with the virtual denial of the existence of any Adversary.

Neither my friend's doctrine nor mine ought to "satisfy" any Christian. Believing in a good God, and believing also that sin exists, we cannot possibly find any belief about the sum total of things "satisfactory." To be satisfied, we must wait. To do our work, we must not wait. And, for the purpose of working, the belief that is most reasonable, most in accordance with Christ's teaching, and least unsatisfactory, is that Light is contending against Darkness in a real struggle, in which it is making darkness a foil to itself and an aid to its own diffusion.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF ISRAEL

1 The story of Abraham

§ 1

We have seen that, in the attempt to propitiate the Powers, men turned to various objects suggested by their various experiences:—to the forces of non-human nature expressed in beasts, winds, air, fire, sun, moon, earth, and sea; to shadows and visions of the departed; to stocks and stones, and other things that seemed to be above man—because superior to time, or supernatural in origin, or connected with great deeds of antiquity.

i All these the several nations worshipped severally as gods, according to circumstances. For example, the clear atmosphere and vast plains of the East favoured the special worship of the heavenly bodies.

ii To whatever they worshipped men imputed a will. So the worship of many Powers was the worship of many Wills. It followed that one Will might be better than another, and one Power might be in conflict

with another; and yet all, the worse as well as the better, even when at war with each other, were still to be worshipped.

iii Besides worshipping the sun and moon, some were impressed with the general motion of the whole vaulted heaven, which seemed to be a "Primum Mobile," or First Moving Power, to which all the heavenly bodies, even those with motions of their own, were always subordinate.

iv Hence, perhaps, in some few thinkers, who had a genius for order, there sprang up the conception that there must be *one* underlying Will and Mind beneath all the actions and forces of the visible world. But the disorderly facts of earth were too strong for this beautiful theory from heaven. The thinkers did not carry the multitudes with them.

§ 2

The worse the Powers, the more accessible they must be to bribes; and men were led to ask what bribe was likely to be most cogent. What did the Powers need? Were they angry and craving for vengeance? Or hungry and thirsty and in need of food and drink? In either case, the offering of living flesh and blood seemed the most efficacious; for blood meant both the satisfaction of vengeance and also the sustenance of life. Moreover, by interchange of blood, men could make blood-friendships that could not be broken. For every reason, blood was the best sacrifice. The most

costly blood was that of one's own offspring. Hence, when special propitiations were needed in calamitous times, it became the custom, in some nations, for a chief to offer up his child to the Powers.

§ 3

Leaving the religions of other nations—in all of which we recognise some truth as well as much corruption—we turn to the story of Abraham, the alleged progenitor of the nation of Israel.

Specialists must decide on the accuracy of its details regarded as history. Our part is to examine the moral and spiritual truth expressed by it. This, at least, profoundly affected the whole nation in later times. And we may add without presumption that it is difficult to believe that the character of Abraham was entirely evolved by a dramatic genius or sprang up automatically from the accretions of tradition.

i The Bible speaks of Abraham as having been the first to receive a "call" to go forth from his polytheistic kinsfolk, extricating himself from the disorder that attended the worship of the Powers, and following the one true God.

Such a "call" might come through a human agent; or through a vision; or through a voice, heard really only in the heart but seemingly in the ears; or through a thought impressing itself on the soul as the very will of God.

ii Passing out of the religion of many Masters, Abraham is said to have received the assurance that God was no Master, but One with whom he was on terms of "grace"—a word implying mutual affection: helpful, protective love on the one side, grateful love and devotion on the other. In this new atmosphere of "grace," he was assured that things would go well with him. This blessing was to be his, apparently, not for his sake merely but also for the sake of others—for the sake of the Truth, which he, alone among men around him, appeared to have grasped. The Truth would not be allowed to perish but would be transmitted to countless descendants, and this though he was at present childless.

The meaning of the term "grace," and the essence of the revelation given to Abraham (and through Abraham to the world) are summed up in the title given to him by the prophet Isaiah, who represents God as calling Abraham "my *friend*." So, too, the Epistle of St. James: "and he was called the *friend* of God."

iii When the child of Promise had grown up, the "call" came to Abraham again. He is said to have been "tempted," i.e. put to the test or trial. We ought to try to realize the circumstances that made the "temptation" a natural one, when he heard the Voice summoning him to do for his Friend what the chiefs of his fathers had been willing to do for their Tyrants. He professed a loving allegiance to his God. What were his professions worth? What would he *do* to prove them? Let him sacrifice his son Isaac.

Thus "tempted," Abraham determined that he must,

at any hazard, obey what seemed to be the suggestion of the Friend, and sacrifice his first-born, as other chiefs were wont to do.

iv When he was on the point of perpetrating the act, a "call" once more arrested him, revealing to him that morality was superior to religion, or rather that morality—when working in "grace"—*was* religion; and his eyes were opened to discern that, though the sacrifice of a ram was permissible, the sacrifice of a son was not. More than this is not stated to have been revealed to him.

v When we read in the Fourth Gospel that Jesus said, "Abraham rejoiced that he might see my day and he saw it and was glad," this does not imply that Abraham foresaw the "day" in the sense of "date," when the historical Jesus of Nazareth was to be born in the reign of Herod, but that he foresaw the ideal of sacrifice.

This is natural. Indeed, given the facts, this is inevitable. Dwelling as a youth amid the tents of the offerers of human sacrifice, was it not certain that such a one as Abraham, in whose heart there was uprising the faith in one righteous Judge of all the earth, would vex his soul with the thought of the unrighteous acts that he was constrained to witness under the authority of his father and his kinsmen? Reverence for parents and Tribe would make him feel that there must be some truth in the old religion. Righteousness would make him rebel against it. "Grace," in the form of gratitude from men, would make him say, "Even our first-born we must be ready to give to Him."

"Grace," in the form of protective love from God, would make him add, "But the Righteous One cannot ask from us such a gift."

Thus, "rejoicing" in the new religion of "grace," and in the expansive power of faith, he would be borne forward to some "day" when "the soul of goodness" in this evil custom would be revealed; dimly discerning in anticipation an ultimate and crowning revelation of the meaning of the truth—which he realised in a very different sense from that of his kinsmen—that, as the tree needs gifts from its children the leaves, and the earth from its animate and inanimate children, so does the Giver of all need gifts from all.

§ 4

But it may be urged that in this account of the evolution of Abraham's faith a serious difficulty has been evaded: "*God Himself* is said in Scripture to have tempted Abraham and to have enjoined the sacrifice of Isaac. Why do you speak of this as being 'what *seemed* the suggestion of the Friend,' except because you mean that the Friend, i.e. God, *did not really suggest it*? And if that is your meaning, are you not arbitrarily picking and choosing between the 'suggestions of the Friend'? When a suggestion is to your liking, e.g. as to the unity or righteousness of God, you treat that as though it comes from God; when it is not to your liking, you say it 'seems' to come."

i The reply must be unhesitating, that wherever the prompting to a bad action is attributed to God, the

attribution is a mistake. Our canon is to be, "The *good* that is in the world God doeth it himself"—the "good," not the evil. If "tempting" is a bad action, and if there is no alternative between (1) believing that "God tempted Abraham," and (2) believing that the Scripture is wrong, we must prefer the latter.

ii But St. James says that "God tempteth no man," and that men cause their own temptations. The book of Job represents Satan, or the Adversary, as allowed by God to tempt. The Gospels describe Satan as the Tempter. St. Paul speaks of a thorn in the flesh, an angel of Satan, permitted by God to "buffet" him. In two parallel passages, where the book of Kings ascribes an act to the influence of "the wrath of God" on David, the book of Chronicles ascribes it to "Satan."

iii We may fairly claim for the interpretation of a passage in Hebrew literature such a latitude as can be instanced from other passages. We may also claim the latitude allowed by the laws of human nature. Abraham was not "perfect." His heart may very well have gone out to Isaac in an excessive parental fondness perhaps resulting in some injustice towards others. But every injustice must be followed by "the wrath of God" coming for a beneficent purpose to pain, convict, and purify.

When this purpose is thwarted by man, it becomes maleficent, at least for a time and in appearance, and we call it Satan, and, in a sense, we may be right. Then we say we are "tempted to our evil." But

when the purifying "wrath of God" is patiently received into our hearts, it becomes a testing and refining influence, and then we may say we are "tempted for our good."

So in the case of Abraham. Suppose, as is quite possible, that he had fallen below his own high standard of righteousness through fondness for the child of Promise. If so, it is easy to conceive a mental reaction in which a sense of his own honour, blended with a sense of what was due to the One God, may have impelled him to shew his polytheistic neighbours, or perhaps merely to prove to himself, that he was still righteous, still sincere, still a devout worshipper of the Righteous Judge of all the earth.

iv Once admit a temptation of this not ignoble nature and then surely it becomes easy to admit the naturalness of the brief expression, "God tempted Abraham." It might have been, perhaps, more exactly expressed by saying, "The wrath of God was moved against Abraham, for his good," or, "Satan was permitted by God to tempt Abraham, to the glory of God," or, "Abraham fell into temptation, owing to some fault or imperfection: but in the end God raised him higher than he had stood before." But surely many—even of those who have stumbled, for a time, at the brief Biblical phrase—will admit, on reflection, that the writer was justified, by a sense of God's overruling guidance through the whole of the Patriarch's life, in ignoring the darker aspect of this trial. He sees the "adversary" so subordinated to the "friend," and the imperfection so swallowed up in the divine revelation of an ultimately

perfect sacrifice, that he finds it best as well as briefest to say, "God tempted Abraham."

2 Israel

§ 1

From Abraham we pass to consider the spiritual training of Israel.

Avoiding disputable questions, such as may arise in connection with the dates of documents in the Pentateuch, we are safe in saying that no other nation was so continuously and effectively trained by its history and literature to receive a revelation of good prevailing over evil, right over wrong, one steadfast and divine purpose traceable through ages of probation, during which God was "tempting" Israel as He "tempted" Abraham.

§ 2

Their own sufferings, and those of their forefathers, led them to emphasize the need of a "tempting" or "proving," both for individuals and for nations. Scarcely any of the heroes of Israel, or pre-Israel, were exempt from exile, or humiliation, or hardship, in the training-time of their youth. Isaac and Solomon were exceptions: but the lives of both ended in anti-climax.

i This fact is hardly realized until we test it by comparison. Greece and Rome had their legendary deliverers and historical patriots who "through faith subdued kingdoms," and some of these were prepared for their task by previous suffering. But even if we granted Hercules and Romulus to be as historical as Jacob and Joseph, a moment's reflection would shew the startling difference between the classical and Hebrew Calendars. Where in the former can we find anything like the sojourn of Israel in Egypt, or the forty years in the wilderness? It was the *rôle* of the Chosen People to be always overcoming obstacles or prevailing against oppression. Almost all their deliverers had to break some bar that seemed to preclude action, or had to begin by being oppressed.

ii Yet in spite of all these sufferings and defeats, the Prophets—who were the real poets of this struggling nation—steadfastly inculcated on their countrymen that there was one Supreme Order governing all things, and that their evils arose from their rebellion against it.

Never did any nation so teem with sudden and strange vicissitudes bringing forth unexpected heroes. Never did any national poetry so strenuously insist that the faithful ought never to be taken unawares by the results of the unalterable laws of divine Righteousness.

§ 3

"Fortune," says Demosthenes to the Athenians, not in jest, but speaking to their full assembly and insti-

gating them against Philip of Macedon—"Fortune is a great influence; indeed it is the greatest of all, in the affairs of nations."

i To that which the Greeks called "Fortune," Israel gave the name of "the Lord our God."

It was "the Lord God" who raised up the beggar from the dung-hill and filled the hungry with good things, while He sent the rich empty away. It was through His word that "the elder" was to "serve the younger." Through Him the mighty were cast down and two or three discomfited a host, and the bow prevailed over the chariots of iron.

ii In this conception there was at bottom a sense, not of caprice, but of *retribution.*

It was fair and just that Esau, the type of the noble savage, should "serve" the unattractive Jacob; that the tall and handsome Eliab should become one of the body-guard of his despised brother David; and that Gideon should prosper as a deliverer and fail miserably as the founder of a royal house. Barak had no purpose of his own; and as soon as he had accomplished the will of Deborah we hear nothing more about him, not even his death.[1] Samson and Jephthah were types of a wild, irregular heroism, but they exemplified the law that "we suffer the evils that we inflict upon ourselves."

[1] The history records the deaths of the other judges with the exception of Shamgar, who possibly was not a judge but simply a leader during the judgeship of Ehud. Similarly Barak may be regarded—notwithstanding the ample mention of him—as a mere leader under the judgeship of Deborah.

Docility, attention, patient labour, righteousness, and trust in righteousness—these things are strength in the end, these things are "salvation."

iii Not, of course, that we accept all the moral inferences drawn by the writers of the books of the Old Testament, or that we fail to discern the hand of the priest (not often, but occasionally, as in the Book of Chronicles) biassing the reader towards a docility bordering on superstition. But the general tendency of the Old Testament is towards the recognition of a just and divine Retribution, which tempers the inequalities, and amends the injustices, of man.

iv "Tribulation," says St. Paul in the New Testament, "worketh patience." The Old Testament does not teach this lesson so explicitly and directly. Indeed, Bacon would have us believe that "Prosperity is the blessing of the Old Testament, Adversity is the blessing of the New." But the Essayist continues, "Yet even in the Old Testament, if you listen to David's harp, you shall hear as many hearse-like airs as carols."

Might it not be more truly said that what is set forth as a truth of *doctrine* in the New Testament is set forth as a truth of *fact* in the Old? The lonely exile Jacob, pillowing his head upon a stone, finds the halting-place of his affliction to be a veritable Bethel, or "House of God": "Truly, God was in this place and I knew it not." So it was with almost all the great characters of the Old Testament. God was in their adversity, but they "knew it not," or knew it only imperfectly. But the law is plainly discernible. Not

only is suffering a blessing, but there is also a safety in slowness of ripening. Isaac receives his good things early, but evil things follow later. Solomon and Josiah "take too high a strain at the first," but their last is failure.[1]

§ 4

But the main difference between Israel and the Gentiles appears to have been this, that whereas the latter were always looking backwards to a golden age, the former were almost always looking forward.

The oldest book in the world, lately discovered in Egypt, extols the good old times as superior to the degenerate present: this also is the tone of the writers of Greece and Rome, and indeed of many now, even in Christendom.

But the books of Israel almost all look *forward* to a Day of the Lord, a Day of Decision, a Day of Righteous Judgment, when the good shall be discerned from the evil and righteousness shall triumph over oppression.

This habit of looking forward (typified in the character of Abraham and exemplified in his life) was caused and developed by the circumstances of Israel—a small and generally peaceful nation placed between the great fighting empires of Egypt and Assyria, and

[1] "There be some that have over-early ripeness in their years, which fadeth betimes . . . : such as take too high a strain at the first, and are magnanimous more than tract of years can uphold. As was Scipio Africanus, of whom Livy saith in effect, *Ultima primis cedebant.*" Bacon's *Essays*, xlii. 57–70.

pressed on all sides by harassing enemies. Israel was never, for long, free and peacefully prosperous. The people were almost always expecting deliverance.

§ 5

Hence, *Israel became a good hater.* The Assyrian marbles, telling us a little of the humiliations, torments, and outrages inflicted in those days upon a conquered nation, give us some insight into the naturalness, the excusableness, we may almost say the morality, of the intense hatred expressed by the Hebrew poets for the "enemies" of their people.

i When this feeling of hatred predominates, the Psalmist regards Jehovah as a Man of War trampling on slaughtered foes and making the tongues of his dogs "red with their blood." In such a mood he can call down the most fearful curses on "the wicked," extending even to their widows and fatherless children, and can pronounce a blessing on those who "dash the little ones of Babylon against the stones."

ii This was not quite the moral retrogression that it seems to be. The Psalmist hated the enemies of Israel, in part at least, because they were the enemies of the Righteous Judge. The loathing of oppression was the shadow of a growing love and longing for righteousness and justice.

Therefore it is that, in spite of these flaws of evil passion, many of the Psalms (and parts of all perhaps without exception) will never become obsolete

even for the purest of Christians. They aspire inimitably. They yearn—with yearnings scarcely expressible in the language of modern, sober Western reverence—for God's "truth" and satisfying presence: "As the hart panteth for the waterbrooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God . . . My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God; when shall I come to appear before the presence of God?"

§ 6

Negative causes tended to the passionateness of religious aspiration. Painting and sculpture being forbidden for Israel, those who vividly realised the unseen harmonies of things, and felt within themselves a power coercing them to give their thoughts vivid expression, were forced to throw all their passion into psalms or prophecies. The literature of the Psalms and the Prophets represents the art, as well as the religion, of Israel.

i But is not the poetic expression of the deepest spiritual thought almost incompatible with the exact and perfect expression of beauty in colour, form, and general literature? Is it not almost always the inartistic and non-æsthetic who have composed the best hymns and psalms and psalm-like books?

ii Or, at least, if students and theologians and literary or artistic persons, or scholars conversant with many languages, have ever written living words in this province—this highest of all arts where art must be absolutely invisible—is it not confined to those rare

instances where some exceptional flood of suffering has swept some exceptional genius out of himself and beyond the reach of the conventionalities of contemporary religion, forcing him into collision with the painful realities of the non-academic and non-religious world, driving him, perhaps, into some parched and stony wilderness where he learns for the first time the meaning of hunger and thirst, and knows what it is to be lonely and lost, with flesh torn by brambles and feet wounded by flintstones—so that he forgets his canons of composition, and even his articles of religion, and pours forth inartistic prayers and uncanonical praises alone to the Alone; and He, seeing and hearing in secret, rewards the sufferer openly, granting immortality to his words and bestowing on him authority to help fellow-sufferers for ever and ever?

iii Thus, Milton in youth, the Milton of bright, beautiful, and sanguine visions, Milton the author of the Hymn on the Nativity, is mortal: but Milton the blind, complaining of his blindness and singing of God's answer to his complaint, is immortal, even though he had written no other words than those which tell us that

"They also serve who only stand and wait."

Cowper, also, the sane—author of the Task, moralizer and preacher—preaches and moralizes well, but, perhaps, only for his century. But Cowper the half insane, shrinking from the plunge into eternal hell, yet proclaiming in an interval of insight that—

"God is His own interpreter
And He will make it plain"

—is so far lifted above the touch of centuries that he must needs speak to English-speaking races as long as the English language shall continue to be spoken by worshippers of God.

§ 7

The art of Greece is as much superior to its religion as the Iliad to the Homeric hymns. The choral songs of Æschylus and Sophocles contain fine occasional outbursts about the inevitability of retribution, the dangers of pride, the helplessness of mankind in the clutch of Nemesis, and the general hopelessness of human affairs, now and then diversified by an appeal to some particular minor Deity : but the religious element is perhaps at its highest in the Prometheus Bound, where a human hero appears to be protesting against the injustice of the gods. A high level of religious righteousness is sometimes reached in a chorus of Euripides, but it is in utterances that exposed the author to the charge of atheism. Nowhere is there any such outpouring to a god, still less to Zeus or any One Ruler of the universe, as we find in page after page of the Psalms.

This being so, we may accept an inartistic Israel as being, no less than a non-spiritual Greece, in conformity with those laws of human Nature which tend to the development of the human ideal. Both nations brought revelations from God to man. That of Israel was far the deeper. But the two go together. Spiritual Christianity is debtor to both, and must despise neither.

§ 8

When Moses brought down the Tables of the Law from Sinai, and heard the cymbals of Israel clanging round the golden calf, tradition declares that he broke the Ideal Law and made another better adapted for the stiff necks and hard hearts of his countrymen. This truth is recognized by the Prophets, who are "very bold" in speaking of the Law of Moses as "statutes that were not good"; and it is stamped with approval by Jesus, who says that Moses allowed certain laws "for the hardness of men's hearts."

Such laws were, for example, the unjust but expedient permission of vengeance to an "avenger of blood," the "Levirate" law (which enjoined marriage between a childless widow and her brother-in-law), and the whole of the laws (humane though they were, comparatively) that regulated slavery.

Many of these were far better than the corresponding laws of surrounding nations; and some of them were superior in humanity to the laws of England up to a recent date. But they are always to be read by us with the same comment: they were "allowed for the hardness of men's hearts."

It is uncertain how far the Levitical Law is due to post-Mosaic and even post-exilic times, but those most competent to judge have decided that very little of it originated from Moses himself, and there is internal evidence in the books of Judges and Samuel to shew that the Law in its entirety was not known in the periods covered by these books.

§ 9

But in the Prophets, generally, we see a conflict between Law and Spirit.

i The Law, with the Priests as its exponents, might appear to many to be a safe rule of conduct, covering man's life from the cradle to the grave, and prescribing acts of sacrifice, purifications, feasts, fastings, abstinences from labour at stated seasons and according to fixed forms—ordinances that would keep the average man in the straight path of righteousness, give him a clear conscience, and make his peace with Jehovah.

ii The Prophets proclaimed that morality was above the Law, and that the Law without morality was worse than vain. Sacrifice itself became "an abomination," unless the sacrificer "ceased to do evil, learned to do good, judged the fatherless, pleaded for the widow, relieved the oppressed."

Some of the Prophets even spoke of a new Law, to be written, not on tables of stone, but on the hearts of men; or of an ampler revelation when the Spirit of God should be poured out in a flood, when old men should dream dreams and young men should see visions, and when a few should no longer have to teach the many, saying "know the Lord," but "all should know Him, from the least to the greatest."

Looking at the powerful enemies of Israel, the Prophet announced, in spite of appearances, that right, not might, was the real strength; that horses and

chariots of iron and fortified cities availed nothing in the end against righteousness; but that Israel, if faithful to Jehovah, would receive a kingdom that should abide for ever, and that the Deliverer of Israel would beat the heathen in pieces like a potter's vessel, and rule them with a rod of iron.

iii This was a natural development of the feeling attributed to Abraham, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?"

But Abraham had also felt that, in the promise of God to himself, "all the nations of the earth should be blessed." This also demanded and received development from the teachers of his children.

Accordingly, some of the Prophets, contemplating the beauty of God's truth and righteousness, and realizing anew that the knowledge of these could not ultimately be limited to Israel, proclaimed in various forms that the good tidings about God must extend to the distant isles of the West, and even to the former oppressors of their nation: "In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth."

§ 10

The "Captivity," first of Israel and then of Judah, followed by the Return, appears to have told for the Law rather than for the Prophets.

i We might be tempted to say, "for the Law rather than for the *Spirit*." But the Spirit works through

Psalmists as well as Prophets; and, in the absence of exact knowledge as to the dates of the Psalms, we must be careful not to over-state. This is a matter for experts and for dispassionate reasoning, not for *a priori* views and rhetoric that begs the question.

ii For example, it has been said, "If the Psalms were the work of post-exilic literates, who simulated the inspiration and the sentiments of traditional heroes of their race, how is their influence in the world to be accounted for?"

But might not men be "post-exilic" and yet poets; "literates"—in the sense of being imbued with the written and oral traditions of their forefathers—and yet not pedants? Could not such poets *feel* the inspiration of some national hero and be so drawn into sympathy with him that, although they dramatically adopted his name and person, placing themselves in his circumstances, and merging themselves in his identity, they expressed, not "simulated," the traditional inspiration, and, speaking sincerely, spoke for all time?

Is the book of Deuteronomy to cease to influence mankind if it is proved not to have been written by Moses? The Wisdom of Solomon, and the sayings of the son of Sirach, and the visions and adventures of Daniel—if we are convinced, as most men of learning are convinced, that their authors "simulated" so far as authorship is concerned, do they on that account become so absolutely valueless that they sink below the level of the possibly genuine Song of Songs?

iii But to this question we must return hereafter. Meantime, the historical fact of the speedy cessation of prophecy combines with the internal evidence from the works of the later prophets to shew that, on the whole, the effect of the Captivity was unfavourable to prophecy and tended to develop a new class called Scribes or teachers of the Law.

Ten tribes of the Chosen People seemed to have perished, or to be in danger of perishing, submerged in the sea of idolatry. The two surviving tribes had been taught by the fate of the ten not to indulge in illusions but to devote themselves to what was practicable, namely, the avoidance of idolatry, and the exact fulfilment of the rules in the Pentateuch. Hence such works as the long and artificial 119th Psalm ringing the changes on the "commandments"; hence, in the book of Malachi, the prominent mention of "tithes"; hence, in later times, the utter extinction of prophecy.

The old inclusive spirit that opened Isaiah's heart even to Egypt and Assyria appeared to have died away. The nation was no longer openly aggressive against the Gentiles. It concerned itself with its own affairs: but it became secretly more exclusive than ever.

§ 11

Closing the Canonical books of the Old Testament, can we feel surprise if some find it hard to resist the impression that the cruellest fate that can befall a nation is to be "chosen of God"?

i For what had the history of Israel and its ancestors been but a series of illusions and disastrous

non-fulfilments, or fulfilments by contraries? The seed of Abraham that was to be as the sand of the sea, what had become of five-sixths of it? The Land that was to be theirs by conquest, did they not hold it on sufferance and by payment of tribute? The throne of David that was to be "established for ever"; the long line of Prophets that was to culminate in the great Law-giver, or Law-interpreter, whom the Lord God was to "raise up like unto Moses"; the hopes of an Anointed Messiah, King, Prophet, and Priest, who was to make Israel ruler over the world—what was the result of all these promises? Nothing (so it might seem) except disappointment and disillusion, drying up the life, and deadening the spirit, of the nation.

ii Not without reason was the land of Israel destined to be "*Palestine*" (i.e. "*Philistine*") for ever! Not their own land, but the land of their foes! Canaan, after all, was *not* their home. They had in it no abiding city. Nominally a land of Promise, it seemed to have been in fact a land of ruin.

iii How appropriate to so sad a history seem the closing words of the Old Testament, not exulting in fulfilled blessings, nor, in accordance with the national spirit of prophecy, pressing forward to the things that are before, forgetting those things that are behind! The Deliverer will come, it is true: but when He does come, "who will abide the day of his coming?" Nor can He even come, until one of the old heroes has come back first. So writes the last of the Prophets, wistfully recalling the days of the great Elijah, and predicting

that he must return to earth to turn the hearts of the children to the fathers and of the fathers to the children, lest Jehovah come and "smite the earth with a curse."

iv "The fear of 'a curse'! That, then, is to be the end of it all!" So might have lamented a contemporary of Malachi, mourning over the decline and fall of Israel. But does not the "fall" of Israel remind us of the "fall" of Adam? A "curse" is connected with both. But in both cases the fear of a curse may prepare the way for the hope of a blessing.

CHAPTER III

THE EVOLUTION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

1 Uncertain Authorship

§ 1

The character of Israel is naturally reflected in its literature, in which there is a total absence of the scientific spirit. Statistics, dates, names, frequently vary; even when they do not vary, they are often discredited by reason.

§ 2

We are uncertain as to the authorship of the great majority of the books of the Old Testament.

i The book of Deuteronomy professes to give us the very words of Moses, and indicates that he wrote the Law with his own hand. But, by those who are competent to judge, it is said that the book was written many centuries after the time of Moses, and that his hand can have composed but little of the Pentateuch. Of the so-called Psalms of David scarcely any are

believed to be his. Nor is Solomon supposed to have written the Proverbs. Who wrote the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles is quite uncertain. The most intelligent students of Isaiah trace at least two authors in the book. Throughout the Prophets, passages from older writers are believed to have been inserted in the more recent. The book of Daniel distinctly professes to have been written by Daniel: but those who ought to know, deny it, and produce strong proof of the contrary.

ii All these facts are of importance for a correct understanding of the Old Testament. But the spuriousness of the books of Deuteronomy and Daniel is the most important of all, for it compels us to re-consider the justice of a conclusion natural to our times, "A book that professed to be written by a man who did not write it, cannot be inspired by God."

If modern critics are right, the book of Deuteronomy was written by some one who felt justified in imputing to Moses words that Moses did *not* utter; and this, not in a drama but in a history, giving the impression that Moses *did* utter them. Again, as to the book of Daniel, even supposing that Daniel said and did and witnessed what the book asserts, yet, by the words "I, Daniel, saw, or said, this or that," the author claims for his work an authority that it ought not to possess.

iii A book thus written in these days would be felt by many to be so morally tainted that it could scarcely be spiritually profitable. We should say of the author,

"He simulates," and there would be an end of the matter. Yet we feel, or ought to feel, that Deuteronomy is inspired by a noble love of righteousness, and that the book of Daniel contains valuable spiritual lessons. The same holds good for the two apocryphal books entitled the Wisdom of Solomon and the Wisdom of Jesus the son of Sirach. No critical considerations ought to prevent us from confessing, if we feel it to be true, "This or that book helps us to do right."

iv Our conclusion is that we should accept, as from God, any book that moves us towards God, without regard to its authorship. The author *must* be imperfect, and *may* be full of moral as well as intellectual imperfections; yet, so far as the book succeeds in leading us to God's righteousness, it is "inspired by God." It may be asked, "Are not insincerity and dishonesty *almost incompatible with such success*?" Yes: but among a people, and in a period, where "the historical sense" was weak, so that the line was not sharply drawn between history and poem, fact and not-fact, where literary reputation was of small account, and where (so far as regards historical narrative) anonymous authorship was the rule rather than the exception, a combination of fiction and fact, even in an avowed history, is not always to be reckoned dishonest.

Nay, more, an excess of reverence for spiritual truth, and for a special teacher of it, may sometimes—paradoxical though it may seem to us—induce a pupil to merge his own identity in that of another: "The spirit of Moses is on me: who am I that I should take unto

myself the word that is his? It is he that speaks. I am but his pen."

2 *Miracles*

§ 1

But, besides fictitious or uncertain authorship, and neglect of historical accuracy, there are also in the books of the Old Testament a vast number of accounts of what are called "miracles."

i To define a miracle is difficult for those who believe that a miracle has never been proved to have happened. However, to speak popularly and roughly, a miracle would be worked if a sequence of phenomena were effected by means universally recognized to be inadequate, e.g. if a mountain were overthrown, not by dynamite, but by a word.

ii Thus, faith-healing may be non-miraculous, and so may be thought-reading, and appearances of the dead to the living; for we perceive laws of nature that tend, or may tend, to cause these things. Hence, they may be regarded as the results of causes recognised to be adequate, if not as yet by all, at least by many of those who have most carefully studied the evidence. But we should all agree that a stopping of the motion of the earth by the utterance of a wish, or prayer, would be in the highest degree miraculous.

§ 2

Some deny the possibility of a miracle. But such a denial is unscientific, especially for those who accept a "protoplasm," i.e. "a first-shaped or first-created thing." For if God created or shaped this protoplasm, out of what did He create or shape it? Out of His word or will? So far as our experience goes, a word, or will, would be "universally recognized to be inadequate." Was it then shaped or created from nothing? "Nothing" is a still less adequate cause. Obviously, then, the first creation of this first-created thing must be called—at present—"miraculous." And what happened once, might happen again.

i Consequently, we should abstain from denying that miracles are *possible*. But this abstinence is quite compatible with a strong conviction that they have never actually occurred.

ii We ought not to deny that it is theoretically *possible* that all the earth's strata, with all their relics of ancient life, might have been made at a cast. But when we hear a scientific explanation, shewing how the same causes that produce familiar effects, now before our eyes, sufficed to produce these unfamiliar effects of prehistoric times, almost all of us assent at once. The geologist does not prove that the causes "produced"—only that they "sufficed to produce." But that is enough for us. "These fossils," we say, "came about in a natural way. They are not miraculous."

§ 3

In course of time, those who are habituated to the regular sequence of cause and effect, recognise it as a kind of divine ordinance that must not, and cannot, be broken; so that it becomes a kind of "blasphemy" to suppose a "miracle."

i This tendency is certainly increasing, and is certainly justified by an increasing stream of experience. Perhaps it will be ultimately felt to be morally wrong to suppose that God *could* have stopped the motion of the earth at the bidding or prayer of a man, or *could* have made the earth's crust in a moment.

ii It is difficult for non-experts to sympathize with, or even apprehend, the impatience felt by experts at theories of miraculous causes for results that the latter have studied and the former have not.

Yet almost every one is an expert at something, and may measure by his own experiences in his own province what other experts feel as the result of their several experiences in different provinces. The needle-woman looking at a piece of elaborate needle-work, the skilful carpenter at a piece of carpentry, able to explain the detailed processes of construction, each in its order, would probably find it peculiarly difficult to believe that an embroidered handkerchief or a carved cabinet was miraculously created at a word. The woman would point to the stitches, the man to the nails and joints and marks of the carver's tools, and

both would say: "These are plain facts. These speak for themselves. God is not a Creator of deceptions. He would not take us in."

iii Similarly, the geologist would bid us examine, with his aid, the construction of a piece of chalk, making us perceive how it was built up from the bodies of countless organisms; or he would take us down into a coal mine where he would shew us marks of vegetation —trunks, stalks, and leaves—imprinted on the coal; or he would lead us to the foot of some cliff and shew us fossil remains of pre-existing and now extinct molluscs, fish, and sea monsters. Then, if you still persisted in maintaining that the Creator had made all this in a moment, and that all these seemingly extinct vegetables and shellfish and animals were not really extinct but never existent, the marks being nothing but so much ornamentation or fancy-work, might he not turn on you with something of a prophet's religious indignation and say, "God is not a man that He should lie"?

Yet sixty years ago the geologist could not take this tone; and it is said that Keble, seated on a stage-coach by the side of Buckland, actually maintained that God might have done something like what has been described above, something that, in these days, would seem to us to approximate to "lying."

iv Until a science, capable of explaining a miracle in question, has established itself as a science, it is not morally wrong to assert that this or that apparent contravention of natural law is miraculous.

This holds good now of many phenomena that may be in the next century as easily explicable by the laws of psychology, or the laws of evidence, as some of the phenomena of the earth's crust are in this century explicable by the laws of geology. For the present, as regards these, contending parties in the Christian Church ought to try to bear with each other, abstaining from hard words. We are all waiting for more light.

§ 4

To return to the miracles recorded in the Old Testament. If we reject them, it is not because "miracles are impossible," but because there is a great deficiency of evidence for them, and much evidence to shew how the narratives may have been originated—or, in some cases, were actually originated—without any miraculous occurrence at all. The deficiency of positive evidence, and the abundance of negative evidence, may be greater or less in special cases; but the general result is rejection. The alleged miracles appear contrary to the laws of evidence.

i According to this view, Israel crossed the Red Sea, under the guidance of God most certainly, but of God working through natural causes. The waters receded before the Chosen People and drowned the Egyptians; but they were not quite "a wall" on this side and on that. By night, God was "a pillar of light," and by day a refreshing "cloud," to His wanderers in the wilderness; but there was no substantial cloud that followed them, no visible column of

illumination. These, and other miraculous details, were no less the results of misunderstanding than the "rolling Rock," fabled in Rabbinical tradition to have supplied Israel with daily water. The day of Bethhoron was such an epoch-making day of victory, and of. pursuit prolonged into the twilight, that the chronicler of Israel (apparently recording what he had derived from some poetic tradition) might say, in the language of borrowed hyperbole, "there was no such day before or after": but the sun and moon did not stand still except in the triumphant songs with which the victory was commemorated in later generations. "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera"—but only so far as Josephus describes the fact, namely, that a thunder-storm swelled the stream of the Kishon and helped Barak to sweep the Syrians to destruction.

ii Samson's strength lay in his obedience to the vows that kept him an unshorn Nazarite; but the poet who first sang this truth did not intend us to believe that the scissors of Delilah could literally cut off the warrior's strength. Nor did he mean us to believe that a spring literally sprang up in "an ass's jaw-bone." Like Strabo's "Ass-jaw-bone" in the Peloponnesus, the place was called "jaw-bone" long before, not from a miracle, but from the configuration of the hills. Again, the spring in "the Jaw-bone" owed its name ("The well of Calling"), not to the fact that by its side the thirsty hero received a miraculous response to his "*calling* upon the Lord," but to its being frequented by the partridge, whose name, derived from its note, was "the *caller*." A similar explanation applies to

Gideon's fleece, dewy amid the dry grass, but dry amid the dew. So it behoved a Deliverer to be—cool when the multitude is hot, fervid when it is cold. Lastly, the walls of Jericho "fell" indeed, as a city is said by us to "fall at the first assault"; but they did not fall literally at the sound of the trumpets of Israel. The story of the capture of Jericho, as it stands in the book of Joshua, is poetic hyperbole interpreted as the prose of fact. As poetry it is true, as prose it is false. But even as prose it conveys a truth beyond the bare fact of the city's sudden capture: for it gives us an insight into the nature of the faith that works wonders though it spoils histories.

iii The *fourteen* miracles of Elisha, compared with the *seven* miracles of Elijah, indicate here and there a somewhat more deliberate and artificial attempt to shew an exact fulfilment of the promise that Elisha should receive "a *double* portion of the spirit of Elijah" if he could discern the latter ascending to God.

Some of these twenty-one miraculous narratives may have had a more solid basis of fact than appears at first sight probable; others seem to have arisen from the mere literalizing of hyperbolical or metaphorical expressions intended to convey spiritual meanings, such as commonly meet us in Rabbinical literature. But the result is that a non-historical framework surrounds some of the most sublime moral and spiritual lessons of the Bible, such as the revelation of Jehovah to Elijah in "the still small voice."

iv This we may reasonably regret. And at first the charge of "simulation" may recur to us as if it could

not but taint the truth. But out of our difficulties themselves may spring some alleviation of them. To suppose, for example, that God caused an "angel" to bake a miraculous cake on miraculous coals, and to provide miraculous water in a miraculous cruse, and (though an "angel," and presumably immaterial) to "touch" the sleeping Elijah and offer him food—this implies such an accumulation of apparently needless portents that multitudes (even of those who accept the miraculous element in the Old Testament as a rule) may naturally find as much difficulty here as in the supposition that God literally "prepared" a "gourd" for Jonah, and a "worm" to eat the gourd, and an "east wind" afterwards, and all these in a special and supernatural way. Hence, many may receive with relief the interpretation that takes "angel" in the sense of "messenger." Any man, any wandering Bedouin, sent by the Providence of God to relieve the exhausted prophet in such a crisis, would be called in Biblical language God's messenger or "angel."[1]

v From this one instance we may take comfort as to others. If this was originally related as a natural though providential occurrence, and afterwards magnified in good faith into a stupendously disproportionate miracle, the same may be true of other alleged miracles of Elijah and Elisha. Until one has read widely in Rabbinical literature, it is perhaps impossible to

[1] Similarly, in Judges ii. 1, "The *angel* of the Lord came up to Bochim," the Revised Version gives, in the margin, the alternative "messenger": and there can be little doubt that the latter was the original meaning.

conceive of the extent of Jewish hyperbole, the quaintness of Jewish metaphor, and the ease with which a combination of metaphor and hyperbole might be transmuted into a detailed and picturesque semblance of history.

vi It must be the business of Hebraistic experts to elicit the historical truth for us: it is ours to hold fast the spiritual. "God's ways are not our ways," so far as concerns this, that He appears often to reveal truth through illusion. What the husk is to the kernel, that, sometimes, illusion appears to be to truth. But our ways ought to be God's ways, so far as concerns this, that we must strip off each illusion as soon as it is shown to be an illusion.

Our belief *about* the historical truth of an alleged fact must not be influenced by our belief *in* the supposed ultimate Causer of the fact. About fact, the question must be, "True, or not true?" not, "Creditable, or discreditable?" God's "credit" ought to be rooted in our hearts too firmly to be shaken by historical evidence as to this or that alleged fact. What could be much more "discreditable" to Him, in appearance, than that He should "cause" the struggle for existence? But ought we on that account to deny the struggle? No. Rather admit it, and simultaneously shake off the old notion that the world was ever "very good" in His eyes, except so far as He saw it in His mind, independently of time, discerning in the Darkness the promise and cause of the Kingdom of Light. So, about other matters, and perhaps about miracles, speaking to us through new evidence, God may virtually say to us,

"It is time for you to give up what once seemed true." That is His way of stripping off illusions. If, after this, we still cling to them, we are bringing on ourselves the condemnation that awaits those who love darkness rather than light.

3 Prophecies

§ 1

It does not follow that, because we reject miracles, we must reject all predictions of future events, or regard all the visions of the Prophets as "not objective."

i In the Biblical Prophecies, detailed prediction plays only a small part. They mostly proclaim the general nature and ultimate fulfilment of God's laws of righteous retribution.

ii Accounts of the fulfilment of detailed prophecy have to contend against a just prejudice based on the exaggerations with which coincidences, between striking facts and casual previous utterances, have been magnified into supernatural predictions. Men have also altered general into particular prophesying, to suit the event, while they have suppressed innumerable instances in which predictions have proved false.

Yet many will hesitate before setting aside as incredible all stories of what is called "second sight." Modern instances of this kind are on record, some of

which we should accept as interesting illustrations of human nature, and call marvellous or extraordinary, but not supernatural. We do not as yet know enough about the laws of our own minds, the connection between mind and mind, and the limits of rapid, unreasoned insight into the future, to say that all alleged fulfilments of detailed prediction in the Bible are incredible. Still, we lay comparatively little stress on them. For, even where they reach their highest probability, they rather illustrate human nature than teach divine truth.

Mere fore-knowledge, even were it complete and absolute, would remain an intellectual, not a moral attribute. In order to become moral, it must spring from sympathy with the moral and spiritual motions of the hearts of men.

iii But as to the visions of the Prophets, far from putting them aside as "merely subjective," we recognize in many of them, no less than in the vision of St. Paul at Damascus, a real, though spiritual, objectiveness.

The flame surrounding but not consuming the bush, the splendour of the sapphire throne, the King on the throne between the seraphim sending the angel to touch with flame the lips of the prophet, the beasts with eyes in every part and wheels turning every way, the Figure seated on the clouds and executing judgment—these and many other visions may be accepted as worthy to be God's instruments for revealing Himself to His children through human nature; as He reveals Himself, through non-human nature, to one nation in the Aurora Borealis, to another in the vegetation of the

tropics, to another in the songs of the blackbird and the lark.

iv Seers and visual revelations have not been confined to Israel. Many of the visions in the Bible itself are inferior to that of George Fox, who saw the sea of death and sin, and, beneath it, the deeper abyss of love. But the Teutonic races are not, by nature, seers of visions. Israel, above all other nations, was the seer of the things of God. Some of the prophetic visions must be regarded as less original than others. The later Prophets may have borrowed from the earlier; and, so far, their visions may have been rather the result of reflection than of pure prophetic insight. But, as a whole, it may be said that the visions of Israel represent eternal realities and objective spiritual truths.

v The poet and artist and semi-madman Blake said that, when the sun rose, most people saw a red disc about the size of a guinea, but that *he* saw an angel crying "Hallelujah, Lord God Almighty." There is a time and a place for both kinds of visions. Neither is, in a sense, "objectively true." Sight itself is an illusion. So is our every conception of God. But as, through the childish guinea-aspect of the sun, we receive and convey to one another a modicum of sensuous truth preparing the way for scientific truth, so the hallelujah-aspect conveys to us a spiritual truth. The great thing for us is, while accepting *both* visions, the sensuous and the super-sensuous, not to confuse the two. Such confusion—in the Teutonic races at all events, and at the present time—leads to lying.

4 *In what sense is the Old Testament an inspired revelation?*

§ 1

It may be urged in support of the miraculous element, whether in act or prophecy, that "We are not dealing with a common nation, but with a special nation, 'the Chosen People.' It is therefore natural to suppose that God revealed Himself to them in a special way, and consequently through miracles. If He did not use miracles, but only Nature, as His instrument, the result ought to be called, not 'revelation,' but 'natural religion.' To deny the distinction between 'revelation' and 'natural religion' is practically to deny that God reveals Himself at all; and it is impossible to believe that the Bible is inspired if the Bible contains falsehoods."

i Put in another form, this amounts to the following argument:—

"A written revelation is not worthy of the name unless its statements are all true, and unless it contains accounts of historically true miracles.

"The Old Testament is a written revelation, worthy to be so called.

"Therefore the Old Testament is free from error, and the miracles recorded in the Old Testament actually occurred."

ii Such a limitation of "revelation" begs the whole question. Speaking popularly, we are willing to confine the term to the highest and most spontaneous conceptions of spiritual insight, just as in art we confine the term "inspiration" to the highest and most spontaneous productions of artistic genius. But, strictly speaking, whoever has received into his heart a faith in God's truth, righteousness, loving-kindness, and other divine attributes, has received a "revelation," whether he be Greek, Roman, or Jew, and by whatever means, and in whatever age, he may have received it.

iii All revelation comes from God through nature, human nature or non-human.

iv All revelation has been through illusion. The senses are illusory. History is illusory. Evidence is illusory. Israel was under illusion. So were the Apostles. So was, and is, the Church of Christ. Logic itself, applied to the attributes of God, must be pronounced either illusory, or frank in the acknowledgment of its impotence.

v Illusions have been described above as being of the nature of a husk, at first protecting, but afterwards confining and harming, the kernel of truth. Our business is so to shake off the husk as to preserve the kernel. Hence, while reverently studying the Old Testament, we ought to acknowledge, as a test of our faith and honesty, the duty of casting aside illusion whenever detected by fresh experience, evidence, observation, or reason.

§ 2

Against the collective miracles of the Old Testament, besides the special evidence against each miracle taken singly, there is a great mass of general evidence.

i They do not fit into the narrative. For example, it is impossible for us, when we reflect on the matter, to believe that the Israelites in the Wilderness could have been confronted with the daily miracle of the pillar and the cloud and yet could have broken out into overt rebellion against Jehovah.

ii They are not consistent with what we are taught to recognize as God's ways of revealing Himself. We do not find that He, so to speak, *forces* on men (for, if the narratives were historical, they would imply force) the evidence of His nature. Such attempts at coercive demonstration seem to misrepresent His will and His attributes.

iii The training of Israel is more intelligible, and the revelation of God to Israel through history far clearer, brighter, and more creative of the highest reverence, without miracles than with them.

It was said by Bacon that the history of Cæsar's conquest of Gaul was superior, as a cause for wonder, to the story of Arthur's Round Table. At all events, none can deny that the simple and natural astronomy of Newton is infinitely more marvellous than the inartistic system that presupposed constant and arbitrary interferences with the order of things—crystal

spheres and epicycles forcing the planets to keep in their orbits, or suppositions that the stars were little lamps in the floor of heaven, or theories that the sun perished every evening, to make way for a new sun fresh from the hand of the Almighty.

The heaven of the ancients was a perpetual "miracle." The heaven of Newton is simple nature, but far more "fearfully and wonderfully made."

iv Treating God's revelation of Himself through Israel as a natural revelation, we shall note, with a fresher and keener recognition, how, as the result of hard probations and agonizing struggles for existence, the nation was led to turn away from the other-world superstitions of Egypt, and to recoil from the brute force of Assyrian or Babylonian despotism, until it developed by degrees a love of practical righteousness, a craving for God's just judgments, an aspiration after communion with the Eternal, and a trust in His "still small voice," so that out of this stiff-necked race there was evolved by intelligible processes that select company of Seers, Prophets, and Psalmists, which was to prepare the way for the Redemption of mankind. Reading the Old Testament thus, not as children but as grown men, and finding in many pages new natural miracles that more than replace the old, we shall do obeisance to a guiding and controlling God of Israel, now more adequately revealed, far nobler than any Power whose presence we had hitherto perceived. In comparison with this new conception of the divine Guide, the old one will seem hardly divine at all, and we shall have to say

with Jacob, "Truly God was in this place and we knew it not."

§ 3

This last consideration answers the question, "What do we mean when we say that the books of the Old Testament are inspired?"

We mean, not that they are specially accurate in accounts of facts, nor that they are specially scientific in accounts of the material causes of facts; but that they help us, as no other literature in the world helps us, to see God conforming man to His own image through progressive lessons in morality and progressive visions of the divine Nature.

i This view helps us to admire the literature of Israel with the sincerity of children yet with due recognition of the experiences of age.

We do not accept what is untrue as truth, nor explain it away as being "meant by the writer to be spiritually true." We accept the books as being, like all histories, partly true and partly false, but as generally containing, even in what is historically false, much that is spiritually true, and, amid this spiritual truth, some truth that is unique.

ii Thus, when we hear that God set His bow in the cloud as a special sign for Noah, or that God "made coats" for Adam and Eve out of the skins of beasts, to say, "That is false," would be almost as pedantic as to stop in the midst of reading the Apocalypse and say,

"This Greek is not grammatical." Of course it is not grammatical; it is the author's dialect. So, as regards these old traditions in Genesis, we ought to say, not, "That is false," but, "That was their way of looking at things in those days. That was their way of expressing what they saw. That was their *dialect*."

iii When Noah—or some one for Noah—said, "God has set His bow in the clouds for a sign," he put into words for the East what Wordsworth has expressed in different language for the West. The rainbow over Mount Ararat had no more claims to be supernatural or original than a rainbow over Grasmere. Then, as now, the heart of man "leaped up" towards God at the sight of the celestial glory, acknowledging that this, and not the storm-cloud, represents what "was, and is, and is to come."

And so of the "coats." God made "coats" for men as He made the first arrow-head for the first archer, the first net for the first fisherman, the first boat for the first sailor. So, Triptolemus is said to have been taught by Mother Earth, otherwise called Ceres or Demeter, to make the first plough. Only, there is this difference, that the Hebrew thought, going on the principle "Qui facit per alium," travels back to the First Cause. An idolatrous Hebrew, adopting the worship of Demeter, would have been disposed to say that the plough was made by the Great Mother. But, even now, is it not wholesome to be occasionally reminded that every epoch-making invention of simple-minded originality comes with special directness from God?

§ 4

A far more serious objection against parts of the Bible is that the moral standard of them is low.

In particular, the blessing pronounced in the song of Deborah upon the treachery of Jael, and the approval (attributed to God) of the conduct of Jehu, and the execrations uttered on "enemies" in the Psalms, fill some pious Christians with horror or with impatient disgust. "Such things," they say, "ought not to be read in Christian Churches."

i Perhaps they ought not. The Church of England practically admits already that not everything in the Bible ought to be publicly read. Possibly we ought to go further, and to omit from public reading passages like these, to which, though they are useful for students (as we have tried to shew above), the ordinary Christian cannot listen without repulsion.

Yet they certainly have a use, even for an average audience, if they force our minds out of mechanical passive assent, and rouse us to a sense of the stern fact that, even in reading the Bible, it is our duty to keep our consciences awake.

ii People have talked complacently about "the right of private judgment," and have been reminded—so often that the correction has almost become a truism—that they ought rather to say "the *duty* of private judgment."

But, for the most part, when people speak glibly

about "the right," or even "the duty," of "private judgment," do they not mean the right of judging externalities, statements made by others, the truth of alleged historical facts, or of ecclesiastical dogma? Do they often understand that it implies the duty of passing judgment on *themselves*?

It is indeed one of the painful accompaniments of an enlightened faith, that it makes us realize more keenly that "the duty of private judgment" is a duty of moral self-judgment: "Is it right for me to reject, upon such and such evidence, the beliefs held by my forefathers? Is it right for me to retain them, if not with the old, at least with a new interpretation?"

iii People who realize this aspect of judgment are probably seldom complacent when talking about it. Their danger lies the other way. Even the sincere and courageous may sometimes find themselves disposed to cry: "O that I might be relieved for ever from the need of consulting my conscience! O that I might find some mass of literal truth that I could always accept in block, always understand without effort, always appreciate without moral training, always act on without reflection! But, alas, there is no such literal truth in the Bible!"

Put briefly, this means, "O that I were not under Grace but under Law! But alas, Christ has destroyed Law!" Such a prompting is natural, but it is from our lower and baser nature. A little lower, and we might say, "O that I were not a man but a machine!" A little lower still, and we might come to "O that I were not a man but a beast!"

Plato, not to speak of St. Paul, would chide such complainings and would bid us "Go on, trusting in the Argument, or Logos." And we, being not beasts, nor machines, but men, must "go on," trusting in *our* Logos. The Christian Logos is different from the Logos of Plato. So much the more "trustful" should we be, and the more willing to "go on."

CHAPTER IV

THE EVOLUTION OF THE JEWS

1 Galileans and Pharisees: their Faith

§ 1

We pass from Israel to the Jews; from the revelation conveyed through the Twelve Tribes to the revelation conveyed through the Remnant, henceforth called the Judæans or Jews.

i The main difference between ancient Israel and the Jews seems at first to be that the former had at once greater virtues and greater defects.

Taking them at their best, we might say that the former remind us of David, the latter of Josiah. Or we might be disposed to assert that before the Captivity the nation was represented by the 51st Psalm, after it by the 119th.

But lines of definite demarcation of this kind are liable to be at any moment swept away by the production of evidence that a particular Psalm, say the 51st, was of post-exilic date. In geology, if we have assigned a stratum to an early period and then find in

it a later fossil, we at once give up our hypothesis of the earlier period. It may be very inconvenient, involving the abandonment of many hypotheses that we had cherished as truths. But no geologist would hesitate for an instant, and when geologists have fairly agreed, no non-geologist would refuse to accept their decision.

ii The same is true as to the strata and fossils of religious thought and expression contained in the Psalms. Possibly a new stratum should be recognized, and a new line of demarcation drawn, in a period with which English readers of the Canonical Bible, unacquainted with the Apocrypha, are comparatively unfamiliar—the period of the Maccabees. It was natural that, after the splendid Maccabean victories had restored to the nation something of its self-respect, the burning excitement of the conflict should be succeeded by lassitude. Having sought and obtained the protection of Rome, the nation needed no longer to turn back in spirit to the days of David. Now, for the first time since Joshua had crossed Zered and made them a settled people, they seemed absolutely free from invasion and oppression. Ceasing to aspire, they might naturally become complacent and formal.

iii Confining our remarks, then, to the post-Maccabean Jews, and looking on their bad side, we might seem justified in taking the view commonly expressed in some such terms as these: "The Israelite was possessed with one spirit of evil, but the Jew with seven. The spirit of heathen idolatry had been exorcised: but

religious formalism, religious exclusiveness, religious pedantry, religious pride, religious uncharitableness, hatred of spiritual truth, and hypocrisy, dominated the whole people."

§ 2

But such condemnations of a whole people are mostly exaggerations. And that this is an exaggeration becomes manifest as soon as we reflect that Jesus Himself and His Galilean followers, and the first generation of Jewish Christians, must be regarded as an integral part of the Jewish nation.

Then we are forced to recognize that there must have been in the Jews, at least in a minority of them, a spirit of enthusiasm and unselfish devotion, capable of being so purified and devoted to good ends as to produce a result superior to anything in the antecedent history of Israel.

i Some may say, "All this sprang from Jesus." But to say this, though it may be intended piously, is surely (in those who reflect on what they say) both irreverent and impious. It is to accuse God of wastefulness in preparing His Chosen People. It is to ignore His providence in raising up such ancestors for Jesus as were fit to contribute to the evolution of such an offspring; and such a mother as we believe He must have had, however we interpret the records of the Incarnation; and such countrymen as the Galileans—simple-hearted, sincere, unselfish peasants, with a burning love of country, and hatred of oppression,

aspiring to "deliverance," and only needing to be taught the full meaning of the term by the ideal Deliverer. And are we to suppose that, as a child, Jesus Himself was not stimulated by traditions of the Jews, as well as by those of Israel; by the history of the Maccabees, for example (who, in their days, were not inferior to David himself for valour and patriotism); and by such more recent events as He Himself might have witnessed in His childhood or heard from witnesses, concerning that well-known Judas of Galilee who taught his followers to call no man Master but God alone? Nor must we forget the circle of elder friends shadowed forth, perhaps, in the characters (whether historical or otherwise) of Anna the widow and Simeon the aged; and such an ally and herald as John the Baptist; and such disciples of His earthly teaching as Peter and the sons of Zebedee; and, later on, such an apostle as Paul, the disciple of His spirit, whom the Greek city of Tarsus could not make ashamed of his country and religion, and whom the straitest sect of Pharisees could not convert into a religious pedant.

ii The autobiography of Josephus, and his other works, lead us to the same conclusion. Josephus himself is far from admirable; and the upper classes and leaders of the people seem to have been unworthy of those who followed them. But among the lower classes there was material for shaping priests and prophets for the world.

§ 3

The great virtue of the Remnant was *faith*:—not, of course, a wholly new virtue, but developed far beyond such limits as it had reached in the days of Israel—a faith no longer liable to distractions, fluctuations, and deviations toward the sensuous idol-worship of foreign nations.

i Faith, for the Jews of those days, was, so to speak, an uncanonical virtue. That is to say, it was scarcely enjoined or even mentioned in the canonical books from Genesis to Malachi. Implied it was, no doubt: but, even by implication, it is altogether subordinated in the Old Testament to "the *fear* of the Lord." By "fear" is meant reverence, and reverence implies faith. Still, the fact remains that the word "faith" is almost non-existent in the Law and the Prophets.[1]

ii But to what extent the Jews carried this virtue or quality some sixty years before Christ's birth let the following incident testify, occurring during the siege of Jerusalem by Pompey.

The Teachers of the Law in those days interpreted it as allowing the use of arms on the Sabbath to defend life, but not to defend the walls of the besieged city. Profiting by this, the Romans refrained on the Sabbath from attacking the persons of the Jews and concentrated their efforts on the demolition of the walls

[1] The English Concordance mentions the word only in Deut. xxxii. 20, Hab. ii. 4.

Thus effecting a breach, they forced their way into the Temple, killed the priests as they stood sacrificing before the altar, slew some twelve thousand of the Jews, and remained masters of Jerusalem.

iii In part, the increase of this particular kind of faith may have been due to the influence of the Scriptures, now regularly taught, interpreted, and explained, by the Scribes. If Israel merely stood still on the shore of the Red Sea, or merely compassed the walls of Jericho, and in each case witnessed the destruction of their enemies by the Lord their God, why should not the descendants of Israel be similarly delivered from the hand of Pompey? The Prophets told them that the Lord's arm was not "shortened" except by their own disobedience. Henceforth, then, they would never disobey. Moses, God's spokesman, had forbidden them to do any manner of work on the Sabbath. To repair walls was to do work. There was but one course open—to look on and see the walls crumbling, the Tower of the Temple falling, and not to stir till their enemies were through the breach, sword in hand, butchering their priests.

iv Faith would also naturally be increased by the Return from Captivity—which they might regard as a second Exodus, a kind of resurrection from national death, and a manifest proof that God would never utterly cast off His people—and by the memories of the Maccabean times: but another cause must be recognized in the recent rise or development of a belief in life after death.

On the doctrine of a future life the Law was silent, and the earlier Prophets, if not silent, mysteriously vague. It is not improbable that the Jews were indebted for it to foreign influence during, and after, the Captivity. In any case, the book of Daniel definitely recognized it; and the belief in a Resurrection, and in a judgment after death, was now accepted by the great majority of the nation. This helped them to trust in God, in spite of their subjection first to the Romans and then to the Idumean Herod. For might not what was wrong in this world be set right in the next?

§ 4

But there were two kinds of faith, that of the Pharisees, and that of the Galileans.

i The faith of the typical[1] Pharisee, as described in the New Testament, was a "faith" in God as the Great Law-giver, who had forbidden certain acts and appointed others; among the latter, purifications, sacrifices, feasts, fasts, rites. By strictly avoiding the former and observing the latter, men could ensure "righteousness." God loved and blessed such "right-

[1] "Typical" is an important qualification. The instances of Gamaliel, Nicodemus, and possibly Joseph of Arimathea, shew that the bitter invective with which Jesus assails the class of Pharisees in the Gospels was not applicable to the whole of the class. And there is other evidence to shew that Pharisean traditions were often inspired by a genuine love of God and man. But the Gospels contemplate the influence exerted on the nation by the Pharisees, as a class, and at a special time.

eousness" as this; and, since they, the Pharisees, attained it, He certainly loved them and would, in the end, bless them.

ii Only, they must be precise in their observance of the Law. Their forefathers had been lax; they must be strict. They must leave, as it were, a margin round every law, so as to be sure of not transgressing it. For example, the Law said, "Not more than forty stripes." "But let *us* say," added the Pharisee, "not more than thirty-nine. Then we are safe. Thus we preserve ourselves from danger of trespass by 'building a fence round the Law.'"

iii But this "fence-building"—involving a close study of the text of the Bible, and subtle applications of ancient and obsolete laws to modern exigencies—needed much leisure, and special training and discussion; it was impossible for the average simple countryman, working for his livelihood.

"How can he get wisdom," asks the son of Sirach, "that holdeth the plough, and that glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks?" By "wisdom," he means "the law of the most High."

It is true that learning in the Law was compatible with *some* kinds of manual labour that did not involve a strain on body or mind, and a Rabbi not unfrequently earned his own living by his handiwork; but, as a rule, it was not possible for such craftsmen as are mentioned by the son of Sirach, the carpenter, and the "workmaster," the smith and the potter. "Learning,"

in his sense, was almost entirely intellectual, not moral; and he rightly says that it "cometh by opportunity of leisure."

§ 5

Such, then, was the faith of the Pharisee of the New Testament, faith in a God of Rules and Explanations—an essentially evil faith, because it ignored conscience and professed to be superior to morality. Instead of the living word of God, it offered to the nation "the commandments of men."

Sometimes, when conscience spoke too loudly to be ignored, the Pharisee, with "This is right" thundering in his heart, would say, "It seems right, but it ought to be wrong, because it is against my Rules and Explanations." Then he became an oscillator.

Or sometimes, hearing the same spiritual thunder, he would say to himself—but much more often he would recognize without saying—"I *feel* it is right; but feelings are deceptive. I am obliged by the Law to *say* it is wrong." Then he became a hypocrite.

§ 6

The Galileans were despised by the rest of the Jews because of their uncouth ways and speech, and because they had a character for being simpletons; but their faith was better than that of the Pharisees. It was faith in a righteous Judge and Deliverer of Israel, mainly a patriotic faith, but containing the germs of a faith in righteousness for its own sake.

There were good Pharisees as well as bad, and bad Galileans as well as good; but the distinguishing characteristic of either, as a class, was for the former to be contented, self-complacent, and hypocritical, and for the latter to be rough, restless, receptive, simple, and sincere.

§ 7

The Pharisees, being the ruling religious class, were able to cast out from the synagogue those who did not practise the Rules and Explanations, whom they called "sinners."

i The falsehood and mischief of their standard of "sin" may be illustrated by the charge brought against them by Jesus in the first two Gospels. They allowed, He said, an undutiful son to devote to sacred purposes the money he should have devoted to the support of his parents. Yet they would censure the same man for not washing his hands before a meal.

ii All Gentiles were technically called "sinners" by the Pharisees, because they did not observe the Law. But many so-called sinners in Galilee were of Jewish birth and may have been cast out of the synagogue for not observing the Law with Pharisean strictness. Galilee bordered on Gentile country, and parts of it perhaps were semi-Gentile. To associate much with Gentiles was hardly compatible with Pharisean Law, or even strict Mosaic Law.

iii Hence may have arisen in some measure the class called "sinners" in the New Testament. No doubt there were among them some who had broken the moral law. But, as a class, the "sinners" seem to have deserved compassion, because they, with the great mass of the toilers of the people, appear to have been shut out from the hope of any high kind of "righteousness" by the general teaching of the successors of Moses. There were provided sin-offerings in the Law to be offered in Jerusalem. But some perhaps could not always go up to the Holy City, even for the three Feasts, much less for special atonements. And, if they could, what availed it, since to-morrow or next day, perhaps in the very earning of their livelihood, they might be in danger of breaking some law, or at least some "fence" round the law, and so might become "unrighteous" again?

§ 8

Thus at the conclusion of our review of pre-Christian Jewish history, we are led to discern an apparent retrogression.

i The aspiration after righteousness of heart noticeable in the Prophets and the Psalms seems now to have given place, in the leaders of the people—who were for the most part identified with the Teachers of the Law—to a contented legalism.

ii So, too, the prophetic conception of God as the Father of all nations, including even Egypt and

Assyria, seems to have yielded—and this, not in the higher classes only, but in the whole people with the exception of a few courtiers, or sceptics, Herodians or Sadducees—to a religious exclusiveness or hostility. Some were content to submit to "sinners" for the present, because they distrusted their own strength and indulged in hopes of triumph over their enemies in an everlasting future. Others were for immediate action. But, in the eyes of both classes, Gentiles, unless they accepted the Law, were "sinners."

iii Among the Galileans, patriots though they were, and perhaps narrow patriots, there appears to have been, at all events, no contentment. The observance of Rabbinical traditions, so far as they could or did observe them, did not satisfy them as a substitute for freedom.

In the fourth Gospel, the multitudes are represented as wishing to make Jesus a King by force, presumably that He might lead them against the Romans; the chief priests,[1] as saying, "If we let this man alone, the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." Contrast this with Moses and the Prophets, in the old days of Israel, continually goading the people into belief in God. It is now the people that believe, and the rulers that disbelieve.

iv In deprecating war with the Romans, common sense was on the side of the rulers; but the rulers did not appeal to common sense. Both rulers and ruled appealed

[1] Some of these were Sadducees: but as a rule the Sadducees were unable to take any political step not approved by the Pharisees, who were the practical rulers.

to the Law, that is to say, the Bible; and the latter had the courage of their convictions while the former had not. The faith of the latter was based on error: but the former, as a class, had no faith at all. Or we may say that the faith of the Galileans was in a personal Deliverer while that of the Pharisees was in their Rules and Explanations, "the commandments of men." Both believed that the deliverance of the nation depended on righteousness; but the righteousness of the Galilean was unconsciously moral, the righteousness of the Pharisee was consciously legal.

v "Ruling" means "directing," and the times demanded a new and genuine Ruler, who would not repress but direct, diverting the energy and the noble trustfulness of the Galileans into a fresh channel, and exhibiting to them a higher ideal of freedom and a worthier object of faith.

2 Legalism and Faith

§ 1

The Galileans may be described as a political sect. Another sect, presently to be mentioned, is described by Josephus as practising a pure morality without exact obedience to the Levitical Law.

i But, even without going further, we may discern in the despised Galileans possibilities of a belief that would "move mountains," a belief that there must be a

way to God above and beyond the Law; that God must be able to forgive even those who had not leisure enough to equal the Pharisees in their observance of traditions; and that He must needs accept justice and mercy and truth and righteousness of heart even where the "righteousness" of legal purifications might be inevitably wanting.

ii Now a belief that God accepts righteousness of the heart would lead naturally to the further belief that God accepts the righteousness of *every heart*, Gentile as well as Jewish.

In Alexandria and Tarsus, and in other cities where the scattered Jews lived with Greeks and acquired some tincture of Greek philosophy, some of them were probably feeling their way towards the same conclusion from a different starting-point. If, said they, God is a Mind, or Spirit, He must move everywhere, and in all, knowing all things, making allowance for all, not prejudiced against this nation or that, nor favouring one nation unfairly at the expense of another, but accepting in every nation those who offered Him the sacrifice of moral righteousness.

The same result was indirectly accelerated by the extension of the Roman franchise to wider and wider circles of foreign subjects and by the consequent breaking down of barriers between different nations.

§ 2

The absence of any Jewish literature contemporary with the birth of Christ, and the scantiness of the

light thrown on those times by later writers, tend to make us under-estimate the causes at work to evolve such a Deliverer, and such a faith in that Deliverer, as would constitute the foundation of the Church.

i Everything, some might say, was against the appearance of a Messiah at this particular time, if a Messiah was to be evolved from natural causes. There was nothing stirring. Prophecy had long been silent. Not even a Psalm had been added to the canon for some generations. The recent traditions of leadership had been base and humiliating. Quarrels and intrigues had transferred the sceptre to a foreigner, the Idumæan or Edomite, Herod. In a time of such political, literary, moral, and spiritual deadness, how could a new leader arise, without some special, divine, and miraculous intervention?

ii But is there not a truth of Nature in the old proverb that "man's necessity is God's opportunity?" Or even the somewhat cynical saying, "It is always the unexpected that occurs"—is not that also strangely true as regards some of the most colossal phenomena in history, such as the French Revolution? But its meaning is, not that the phenomena are causeless, but that the causes lie deep. And, the deeper the cause, the more violent the eruption.

iii More especially as regards sudden and startling visitations, and what may be called the apparitional phenomena of history, are there not always causes for them, yet causes (like those of dreams) impossible to

predict, and often difficult to trace? How frequently does Nature give us her most vivid revelations of herself when we do not sit down to prepare ourselves for them, and sometimes when we prepare ourselves for something quite different! Dejected and despised Gideon was doing the work of a peasant, Moses that of a shepherd of a foreigner's sheep, Saul of Tarsus that of a persecutor; when each received his "call." As it is with individuals, so it often is with nations; just when the leaders are sinking into lethargy, and the masses are helplessly looking to their nobles or priests, senates or tribunes, for some one that shall interpret for them their own thoughts, and set right the wrongs that they feel yet cannot express—there suddenly starts up deliverance of a nature beyond their preconceptions, and perhaps from the very quarter from which they were turning away in despair.

iv Besides, there were causes at work (as has been hinted above) which might perhaps have prepared a close observer, gifted with insight, for some renewal of the ancient deliverances. Josephus gives but a brief account of the uprising of Judas of Galilee, who forbade his followers to call any man Master, and a still briefer one of John the Baptist: but the attraction exercised by both leaders, and the Evangelistic accounts of the latter, give us glimpses into a condition of national thought not indeed deducible from direct evidence, but indirectly demonstrated to have existed. The fourth Gospel graphically describes the general attitude in the words, "Art thou the Christ? Art thou the Prophet? Art thou Elijah?" When such questions were rife,

men must have been prepared, not only for deliverance, but for revolution.

v The existence of the Essene sect points to the same conclusion. It was for the most part a recluse sect, combining mysticism with asceticism. Some classes of Essenes required celibacy and abstained from animal sacrifices. Such a contravention of the Levitical Law, unblamed by Josephus, indicates that the age was an age of religious experiment and that the nation was not fully represented by Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and sinners, even when supplemented by the political sect of the Galileans.

Why Essenism is not mentioned in the New Testament, it is hard to say. Some give as the reason that it did not move the masses of the people. But neither did the Sadducees, and still less the Herodians. Others suggest that Christ's followers, or at all events those of John the Baptist, may have sprung from the Essenes, or were favourers of the Essenes. Be that as it may, the existence of this sect indicates questionings, discontents, and aspirations, that do not come to the surface in our Gospel histories.

vi On the whole, therefore, though the prospects of the nation appeared to be at their darkest, and perhaps in part *because* they appeared to be at their darkest, there ought to be no difficulty in believing (so far as the objection of unexpectedness is concerned) that, at this particular point of time, and through the instrumentality of natural causes, the last and greatest of all the Deliverers of Israel, the one that most completely

recalls to our minds the image of the progenitor of the race, the "friend of God"—evolved from the protoplasm (if protoplasm there was) by the same all-controlling Logos whose purpose has run through the ages from the beginning—issued forth to the world, like a heaven-sent apparition "in the dead vast and middle of the night," to rouse the children of Abraham to a new faith, to instil into them truths beyond the reaches of their souls, and to purify them to be priests and heralds of the universal Promise, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed."

CHAPTER V

THE EVOLUTION OF THE DELIVERER

1 More than a Prophet

§ 1

PRESUPPOSING that the new Deliverer of the Jews is the result of evolution, divine but natural, what may we expect him to be, regarding him as at once the highest representative and the ideal redeemer of his nation?

§ 2

There will be nothing in him of the scientific, nothing of the Greek artistic spirit. He will represent the spiritual aspirations of the Psalmists and the Prophets in their highest and purest fulfilment, a perfect communion with God.

§ 3

This communion will imply something more than that of a prophet or faithful servant, something closer

even than the "friendship" between Abraham and God. It will represent the purest relation between God's people and God, the communion of *sonship*, according to the saying of the prophet concerning Israel, "Out of Egypt have I called my *son*."

i This filial feeling of identity with God will prevent the new Deliverer from lightly attempting to change God's will by entreaty or prayer. He will, of course, accept the traditions of his people that Joshua stopped the sun and Elijah called forth rain. But such works as these, grand, striking, and marvellous though they were, he will perceive by a special insight not to be destined for *him*. They were of the nature of the "storm," the "fire," and the "earthquake"; *his* part is that of the "still small voice." He must give no "sign from heaven." In one sense, all things will be possible to him, because he will desire all things that the Father desires; but in another sense he will be more limited in action than the most imperfect of men, because he can do nothing except what he sees the Father doing.

ii Filial zeal for a Father in heaven, who speaks through the "still small voice" of the Spirit, will affect all his conceptions of deliverance. To *him* the great "enemy" will seem, as to the Prophets, "idolatry"; but it will be invisible and spiritual idolatry, expressed in all those subtle forms of selfishness which come between man and God. This Deliverer will come to redeem his people, not from "sinners," but from their *sins*—or, if from sinners, not from their external, but

from their internal enemies, not from the Romans, but from the Pharisees.

iii The visions of this Deliverer will not be such as those of the ancient Prophets, spectacles of splendour, streams of flame encompassing a throne of sapphire and accompanied with fearful voices paralysing the sense. Constant spiritual communion with the Father will be substituted for the isolated ecstasies of the prophetic state. Such visions and voices as may present themselves to him (if any do present themselves) will be visions and voices of peace—not of the King seated between acclaiming Seraphim, but of the dove hovering from heaven, and the voice recognizing him as a son.

§ 4

For him, as for all the Prophets, the truth will hold good that "the things that are seen are temporal, and the things that are not seen are eternal."

i But his interpretation of the things that are "seen," and his insight into the things that are "not seen," will differ from those of the Prophets, proportionally to the difference between a son and a servant.

The king's servants, seeing his face but at intervals, know something, but not all, of the secrets of the palace and of his policy, carrying orders of which they sometimes but half understand the meaning. But the king's son, abiding with his father, reads his thoughts in his countenance, and knows the secrets of his heart.

Hence, whereas the servants bring forth messages of

peace or war, and are inclined to dwell on the external grandeur and splendour of the palace, the son will tell of a purpose and of a person. In him, there will be no thought of a palace, but only of a home. And the home will be merged in the person. Wherever the father is, there is the home of the son.

ii The secrets of God's palace correspond to the laws that regulate the rise and fall of this nation or that empire; the secrets of His heart correspond to the laws that regulate the gradual conformation of the human soul to its divine ideal.

Hence, we may expect the teaching of the Son whom we are now contemplating to differ from that of the Prophets as the "still small voice" differs from the earthquake and tempest. The quiet processes of nature, the growth of corn and flowers, the wandering of sheep, the leavening of bread, the labour of the fisherman and the housewife—all these phenomena of the fields and the household speak with divine utterance to one who is everywhere at home with God. But there is no home in which God dwells so willingly as in the heart that turns to Him with the trustfulness of a child: and hence, above all, the silent appeal of the human soul—and especially when it is struggling to extricate itself from sin—will come to the Son as a special voice from the Father revealing His divine purpose of redemption.

2 Suffering and Forgiving

§ 1

There were many prophecies about a Reformation in store for Israel. One spoke about a new Law that was to be "written on the heart": another about "a fountain" that was to be "for sin and uncleanness" unto the people: others about a Spirit that was to be poured out on Israel, so that there should be no more need for the teacher to say "Know the Lord," but *all* might know Him, from the least to the greatest.

These will inspire and stimulate the new Deliverer to ask where this "fountain" may be sought, whence this "Spirit" may be imparted, and what is the nature of this "new Law."

§ 2

From his childhood he will have been penetrated with pity for the outcasts of Israel, the wandering sheep, the neglected sinners, those who hungered and thirsted in spirit after a righteousness that the Pharisees could not give. All the stronger will be this feeling if he has lived among the poor and hard-working, and especially if he should be a countryman of the despised Galileans, a half-Gentile folk, in a "land of darkness and the shadow of death."

i In this absorbing pity he will feel that he is one with the Father; that what he feels, the Father may, in a sense, be said to feel; and that what he may do to deliver these poor outcasts, the Father Himself will ratify: or rather, perhaps, to state things in their spiritual order as the fourth Gospel states them, that the Father *has* ratified it. Whenever the son lifts a burden from a sinner on earth, he will do it because the Father has already lifted it in heaven.

ii Like his predecessors, the Prophets, he will take no step forward until he has received the sign from the Spirit. But when the Spirit descends on him, it will find him ready, not only to proclaim a message as a prophet, but also to fulfil it as a son—not only to utter the words but to "do the works that the Father has prepared for him to do."

iii The "fountain for sin and uncleanness" he perceives to be the Spirit of love and pity. This Spirit he feels to be in himself and therefore in the Father; or in the Father and therefore in himself. This, too, is the "new Law"—a law "written," as the Prophets had predicted, not on tables of stone, but on the heart, as the impress of a living Voice. But indeed "written," though a natural word for a Scripture-loving prophet, does not quite express the reality. For this is no mere phonograph, registering answers to questions of conscience and recording messages of God's will in this or that emergency, but a personal Voice or living Breath, whispering tidings of comfort to the

broken-hearted, and breathing new life into those who are drooping to a spiritual death.

iv This Spirit he will feel to be, not merely within him, inspiring him to proclaim good tidings to the sorrowful, and release to the captives of sin, but passing forth from him in power, *conveying* that release. The Prophets predicted. He will fulfil. What they *promised*, the Deliverer will *be*.

v The logical result of all this will be that he must take upon himself what hitherto had been conceived to be the Divine Prerogative, the power of remitting or forgiving sins. In truth, as will be seen hereafter, this power has existed in man from the first moment when man began to be endowed with the divine capacity of feeling pain for the sin of another. But what hitherto had existed as a spark the Deliverer will now introduce into the world as a sun.

vi The Pharisees of his day will condemn the act as blasphemously profane. Some of his followers will defend and misunderstand it as a proof that he was "equal to God." Charitable sceptics will set it down to a half sublime, half fanatical egotism. But, in fact, the cause will lie, not in intense egotism, but in intense self-subordination to the will of a loving Father; not in the feeling that he is "equal to God," but in the consciousness that he is so completely one with God that arithmetical comparisons of greater or less are inapplicable.

vii But the most cogent cause of all will be pity. Contemplating, as one with the Father in heaven, what the sinner might be, and realizing, as one with man on earth, what the sinner is, he will be constrained to pronounce the forgiveness of sins for many whom he sees bound by Satan in sin and infirmity, yet possessed of faith enough to receive their freedom. The power that he is thus impelled to claim will be proved by results to be a reality. Sinners, feeling themselves forgiven, will be converted from sin to righteousness.

viii In some cases, the power of the strong emotional shock that thus proceeds from him may extend to the healing of bodily diseases, especially such as, in his time, may be attributed to the direct agency of Satan. But, in the eyes of the Deliverer, the primary work will be the deliverance from sin.

§ 3

There is a mechanical remission of sins, and there is a spiritual. The former is easy, the latter difficult. The former is an act of human sacerdotalism, involving no pain in the priest who absolves. The latter is an act of divine sacerdotalism, involving such pain as only a divine power can help humanity to endure.

i The Rulers of the Synagogue had power to bind and to loose; that is, to proclaim some actions to be lawful, others unlawful, some purifications valid, others invalid, and, in accordance with their decisions, to cast some out of, and admit others into, the visible

congregation. That was an appropriate task for the Scribes or Teachers of the Law. In doing this, they were as much within their legal right as English Judges. But, as long as they regarded their decisions as purely legal and not moral, they had to be guided by precedent not morality. Certainly, they never confused such binding or loosing with the forgiveness of sins. "Who can forgive sins," they said, "save God alone?"

ii But the Deliverer, who feels himself to be the Son, when realizing the Father as being what he himself is, a Spirit of pity, will perceive that, if God is indeed, as He is described in the book of Deuteronomy, "a nursing father," bearing Israel in His arms, and if He is, as the Pentateuch and the Psalms describe Him, "long-suffering," there must be in the Father something corresponding to the "suffering" felt by the Son for the sins of the children of men.

iii Some of the Prophets had predicted the advent of a mysterious Sufferer, a servant of God but also a Son of God, to be identified, apparently, sometimes with an ideal Israel, sometimes with an ideal Deliverer of Israel, an Anointed One—in other words, a Christ, or Messiah.

iv As soon as the Deliverer has recognized that to endure the painful burden of the sins of others is a condition for one who would forgive them, and that the forgiveness of sins and the establishment of righteousness constitute the only true Kingdom of God, he will discern in the whole of the book of God's revelation, whether in the Bible or in the world,

converging testimonies to the need of the self-offering of that suffering Messiah whom he will sooner or later identify with himself. The leaven diffuses itself into the loaf; the sunshine and the rain come down from heaven to merge their life in that of the fruits of the earth: the seed falls that it may die and bring forth bread for men. So, too, in the types of the Law and the history of Israel, the Lamb of the Passover is sacrificed that God's people may live; the Prophets are persecuted and slain that God's word may be proclaimed; Abraham—the friend of God, and (of all the patriarchs) best fitted to be the type of the Father—suffered "temptation," and, so far as will was concerned, offered up his son on the altar. Thus, types in Nature and types in the Law might combine with definite prophecies ("all things that are written in the Law and the Prophets") to shew that God Himself is in some sense continually giving Himself for His children and, like Abraham, fulfilling His own Law of sacrifice.

But if the Father is like Abraham, what must the Son be, if not like Isaac? And what work can the Son do except that which he sees the Father doing? The Father is conducting him on the three days' journey to the hill of sacrifice, having prepared the wood for the offering: and the Son is, by anticipation, travelling on that journey and preparing to be bound and laid on the altar, "upon the wood."

§ 4

Speaking materially, men might declare that such a Deliverer's success depended on some occult influence, or

"virtue," passing out from him to others. Speaking more spiritually, but still in a figure, we may say that his public life will be a "bearing of sins and carrying of iniquities," and that he will recognize in himself a fulfilment of the prediction of that "Man of Sorrows" on whom was to be laid the "chastisement" of the nation's peace.

Sorrow, of course, does not imply gloom. Nor can his life, though sorrowful, be one of unmixed sorrow. Nor indeed can it well be a life of asceticism. If he realizes the darkness of sin more keenly than others, it will be because he enjoys within himself the perpetual presence of the Light that makes war against the darkness. Not the most thankful of the Psalmists could recognize more lovingly than he does that the earth is full of the riches of God, and that corn and wine and the other gifts of the Father were given to make men of a cheerful countenance and to dispose their hearts to be glad and grateful to the Creator.

§ 5

If, now, we ask what will be in detail the nature of the new Deliverance, and what it will bring more than a deliverance from sin, the reply must be "It will bring nothing more."

i But deliverance from sin implies communion with the Father in heaven, and that implies fellowship between the children on earth; so that, in effect, the new Deliverance implies the establishment of a Kingdom, or Family, of Righteousness, in which God

is the King, or Father, and men the subjects, or children.

ii Some of the Prophets seem to have taught that the deliverance from sin was a *condition* of "salvation," in this sense, that God would reward the forgiven in consequence of their repenting and putting away their sins; but the ideal Son will realize that it *is* salvation. And indeed, if we try to imagine what earth might be if all individuals and nations obeyed, or approximated to obeying, such a Deliverer as we are now conceiving, it is hard to set limits to the improvement in body and mind, in health, science, and art, that would result from a regenerated race delivered from all fear except that of selfishness, and quickened to a new joy in every visible and invisible thing that represents the good, the beautiful, and the true. And if the love of God, as was said above, needs, for its consummation, human "strength," and "soul," and "mind," as well as "heart," then, in this reformed world, the lower would re-act, for good, upon the higher, and that, in turn, upon the lower, all human faculties thus co-operating toward the salvation of the whole man.

§ 6

By what detailed course of action, and at what precise time, this Kingdom of God is to be established, the Deliverer will not know. But he will know, generally, that it must be effected by the outpouring of that divine Spirit of sonship toward God and brotherhood toward men which he feels within himself

i It may seem contrary to our conception of the ideal Deliverer as a Son that he should be ignorant of God's times and seasons. Had not Isaiah mentioned the definite name of Cyrus, and specified "seventy years" in connection with a prophecy about Tyre, as Jeremiah also had done about the captivity in Babylon?

ii That was indeed so, or believed to be so. But these were what has been described above as "secrets of the palace." The Fatherhood of God, "the secret of the heart," independent of time and place, might reveal to the Son no more than the certainty of its ultimate predominance over all evil. Speaking as a man, he might predict roughly, of this or that evil thing, that it should not outlast the present generation: but he would neither know, nor wish to know, the exact dates of events foreordained in a chain of causes and effects to fulfil the Father's purpose. These were rather secrets of the mind than secrets of the heart.

iii The great "secret of the heart" will be the power of the filial Spirit to overcome the forces of selfishness and sin.

As in the history of mankind the influence of little children has been potent on parents from the beginning, disarming and softening violence that could not have been tamed by force, so will it be in the new Kingdom introduced by the new Deliverer. The meek are to inherit the earth, the hungry in spirit must be satisfied, the proud shall be cast down and the lowly lifted up. Such had been the experience of Israel, where Israel

had obeyed God's voice; such will be the law in the Kingdom of God. The Son himself will not be able to adopt into the family of God any who will not receive the Spirit of sonship, or, in other words, "become as little children."

§ 7

Whence and how can masses of men receive such a Spirit?

i Men receive the spirit of poetry, painting, music, and sculpture, in part from some Master or past Masters of the art, in part from the environments of Nature and from the atmosphere of national art, but also very largely from their peculiar individual endowments of mind and sense, predisposing each to receive, and enabling each to embody in sensuous shapes, some special revelation of the harmony of the Universe. And the same holds good of the spirit of statesmanship and administration of affairs in peace or war. But we are speaking of masses of men, not of the solitary man of genius: and the spirit here in question is not one of art, but of morality. It is the Spirit of the Home, which all men have possessed, and which has possessed all men, since, and perhaps before, the time when they emerged from what they were to what they are. It is not, then, a new Spirit but an old one, and the question we are asking is, Whence and how can men receive it in a new and regenerate form?

ii The answer appears to be that, though it may spring in part from the training of their several homes

and nations, it must be mainly due to some Master or past Masters of this spiritual art, if it may be so called, the art of the Home.

iii He that receives a "prophet" in the name of a prophet, that is to say, as being a prophet, receives a prophet's reward, entering (at least some little way) into the prophetic province open to all that discern God's will. He that receives a "righteous man" as being a righteous man, receives a righteous man's reward. Similarly, he that receives the Son of God as being the Son of God, receives the corresponding reward, the Spirit of sonship and a knowledge of the art of the Home.

iv The traditions and training of Rome, and of other states, might make obedient and dutiful sons, who would "live long in the land," because each honoured his own parents and the ways of his own home with a wise reverence: but we are speaking of a new Sonship, in virtue of which the soul gladly subordinates itself to the parental teaching of all that is good in every nation, making a home of the Universe.

v Such a Spirit as this was very different from that of Rome. It is hardly possible to conceive of it as being received from any merely national training under Law. No books, or notions of books, no Law, could convey it. It must come, at least in the outset, from a man. From Moses it could not come; for he represented Law. Whosoever received Moses received the reward of Moses, the righteousness of the Law.

Humanly speaking, it might have come from Abraham: but Abraham was before his time, a type, not a fulfilment. It is in accordance with the principles of evolution to believe that it may have come from one of "the seed of Abraham," in whom were summed up the best characteristics of Abraham's descendants, carried to their highest point.

§ 8

The Deliverer we are describing will be too far above his people for immediate success. They cannot attain unto him. As he moves on his solitary course, misunderstood, despised, hated, rejected, he will realize with increasing vividness that he was called indeed to be a Messiah of suffering, and to "give his life a ransom for many." But he will move inflexibly onward, comforted indeed by the predictions of the Prophets, but finding his chief strength and sustenance in communion with the Father whose will is his own, and in whom he realizes peace, life, and "salvation." Though persecutions and death may await both him and his disciples, yet "not a hair of their heads" will be harmed. Nay, though he may die, yet will he live, according to the saying of the prophet Hosea, "After two days will he revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."

§ 9

But we have seen that Nature consistently works by conflict and by "the survival of the fittest": will there

not seem to be a suspension of the laws of Nature in the new Kingdom, if "the meek" are to "inherit the earth"? Where, in the world of evolution, is there room for a "meek" deliverer? In such a world as ours, how can he and his followers struggle with success so as to vindicate their claim to be called "the fittest"? And if they do not struggle, and yet succeed, must we not say that their success is miraculous?

If the meanings of "meek" and "fittest" are borne in mind, the reply must be that "meekness," far from being incompatible with conflict, may succeed in it through natural causes, and may even be a criterion of "fitness."

i In the first place, as to "meekness," we must not be misled by the use of the word in popular English. It is perhaps hardly the best word, or, at all events, perhaps not usually understood rightly. It would certainly be the wrong word if it conveyed the impression of flexibility in matters of principle, or if it suggested a character incapable of burning resentment.

Our Lord was not what would be described as "meek" to the Pharisees. St. Paul, though he never stood on personal dignity, and delighted in being all things to all men, was not what we should commonly call "meek." Perhaps we should choose another word or group of words to express what is meant.[1]

[1] It is most noteworthy that the fourth Gospel, in quoting the prophecy of Zechariah about the Messiah "*meek*, and riding upon an ass," omits the word "meek," and this although St. Matthew's Gospel inserts the word. There is still extant a mass of Rabbinical discussion as to the force of the term in this prophecy, and its

ii The essence of the word seems to lie in the fulfilment of the royal law of neighbourliness. It means a disposition to shrink from pushing one's own claims except where honour or justice is at stake; an inclination to err, if at all, on the side of under-rating rather than on that of over-rating one's own abilities and character, but never so as to be guilty of conscious error and insincerity. This implies a habit of putting oneself in one's neighbour's place so as to understand and appreciate him.

iii Genuine meekness will therefore imply impartiality and justice, sympathy and thoughtful consideration, docility and obedience, a reasonable patience, and a sociable readiness to give as well as take. The genuinely meek man will never be guilty of a contemptible shyness or bashfulness (which, when not due to physical causes, is often, at least in part, the result of a self-conceit that shrinks from the crowd into what Bacon describes as the self-admiring solitude of Narcissus). St. Paul was never shy or bashful, nor was George Fox, nor any man whose heart was always consciously open to the breath of the Spirit of God. He who is truly "meek" will have no meanness to conceal, no duplicity to be ashamed of, nothing to make him reserved or preoccupied; everything to make him frank, unashamed, open, and single-hearted.

bearing upon the conception of the Messianic advent. Either this, or considerations of the inadequacy of any one Greek word to represent this characteristic, may have caused its omission in the fourth Gospel.

iv This is the kind of "meekness" that the ideal Deliverer will enjoin; not half-hearted meekness, which must needs be a failure, and, indeed, worse than a failure—for it borders on calculated meekness, which, besides being a failure, is hypocrisy.

We are contemplating whole-hearted meekness, such a just, genial, and reasonable feeling of good-fellowship as has been above described. And does not this, even in the earthly life of commerce and politics, go far to help men to "survive"? Does it not preserve the heart from many consuming cares, and keep the brain clear from vaporous self-conceits and blinding partialities? Does it not arm a man against idle jealousies and suspicions, giving him the deep peace of a good conscience that sustains him in the stir, the tumult, and the wear and tear of competitive affairs? Even the shrewdest man of business might well admit that it was worth while sacrificing a bit of occasional profit from sharp practice if he could thereby secure a clear head and an unanxious heart.

v "It must be admitted that 'meekness' has not as yet conspicuously contributed to the enlargement of empires, and perhaps not even to that of visible churches. But, if not 'meekness,' do not justice, reasonableness, honesty, and the spirit of 'give and take,' already help some races, and still more clearly some families, to 'inherit the earth'? And may we not look forward to a time when the patient and peaceful qualities will gain the victory over the savage and warlike, when restless Esau will fade out and plain, quiet Jacob succeed to his tent?"

vi So the author wrote some four years ago (1893); but his words seem now, in the light of recent events, to verge upon understatement. He ought to have reflected that Jacob's cunning went far to undo the natural results of his placability and steadfastness, and brought upon himself and his children the punishment that it deserved. More stress ought to have been laid on the successes of the Quakers (whose diminution in the number of visible converts appears to proceed in some measure from the fact that they have partially converted, or at least leavened, all the churches) and on those of the Monastic Orders, which mostly throve by meekness, and failed, if not visibly yet spiritually, by ceasing to be meek. And even as regards the British Empire we seem to have learned, or to be learning, the lesson—old for the world, but new for each nation in turn—that the sabbathless pursuit of "national interests" is ordained by the laws of Nature to defeat itself; that even a continuous policy of non-aggressive selfishness excites a suspicion and distrust that may accumulate till it fetters the action of a great people, partly because they may find themselves surrounded by many external enemies, partly because they feel the paralysing presence of an internal enemy in their own conscience; and that, in the end, after the Day of Decision, the gates of empire will be found open to the "meek," and to the "meek" alone, "in order that the righteous nation which keepeth truth may enter in."

§ 10

However, we are now to deal, not with a conjectured future, but with a past, conceived as the natural sequel of an earlier past. We have been sketching an outline of a natural and naturally evolved Deliverer of Israel, as we conceive he might have been evolved without miraculous agency. This Deliverer we assert to be capable of being identified (as will be seen more clearly hereafter) with the actual and historical Jesus of Nazareth. Supposing this identification to be established, we shall then proceed to assert that, if Jesus succeeded, He succeeded naturally and because He was "the fittest" to succeed.

But, if we conclude that He was "the fittest" to succeed, this conclusion affects all our views of the cosmic forces of which He was the outcome. For we shall now be more convinced than ever that amid all the apparent chaos of the abysmal non-morality and immorality from whence this moral triumph has been evolved, there has been at work a "friend" as well as an "enemy," and this friendly Power by far the stronger and wiser, working His will through latent forces so as to make evil subserve the tendency toward a supreme good.

BOOK III

RECORDS OF THE LIFE OF CHRIST

CHAPTER I

THE ACTS OF CHRIST

1 Before St. Peter's Confession

§ 1

We proceed to consider the principal acts of Jesus, in their order ; as they appear, apart from the miraculous element in the records, but not apart from our frank recognition of a unique Person prompted by the Holy Spirit to come forward as the Deliverer of Israel.

i After thirty years of waiting, Jesus appeared to the world as a disciple of a new prophet, who was predicting the coming of the Kingdom of God, and who was urging his countrymen to prepare for it by a "baptism of repentance unto remission of sins."

ii The practice of the Jews was to baptize all Gentile proselytes. Treating all his countrymen as if they were Gentiles and needed to be made Jews afresh, this prophet called on his disciples to undergo this purifica-

tion "with water" as a preliminary to a higher purification "with the Holy Spirit and with fire."[1]

Every Jew could understand the metaphor of purification "with fire," for it belonged to his history. It was enacted by the Law that things taken from foreign enemies should be purified "with fire" if the nature of the thing would endure it; if not, "with water."

iii At the moment when Jesus was being baptized, He is said to have received a vision. Such an experience was common to all the Prophets of Israel. But whereas the Prophets had for the most part seen God as a presence of fire producing terror or trance, this vision revealed God as Peace descending upon Jesus in the shape of the Dove, the bird of Peace; and a voice came from heaven, "Thou art my beloved Son."

The three Gospels do not say whether the Baptist saw the vision or heard the voice. The fourth asserts that he saw the vision, but it makes no mention of any voice, either as having been uttered to Jesus, or as having been heard by John.[2] Leaving these questions open,

[1] The words "with fire" are omitted in the earliest of the Gospels, St. Mark's, but there appear good grounds for retaining them.

[2] The earliest Gospel (St. Mark's), though the author almost certainly regarded Jesus as seeing the vision, makes it (1) just possible that he regarded it as seen by the Baptist alone, and (2) by no means improbable that the original tradition took that view. The fourth Gospel mentions the vision as seen by the Baptist, and does not mention it as seen by Jesus.

As to the voice, St. Mark and St. Luke have "Thou art my beloved Son," which must have been addressed to Jesus; St. Matthew has "This is my beloved Son," which would most naturally

we accept the statement that he recognized in Jesus, not a disciple, but a leader.

§ 2

Jesus retired into solitude to prepare for the new work to which the Prophet and the vision appeared to call Him—namely, to bring in "the Kingdom of God."

i The correspondence to the "forty days" of Moses in the Mount, and the "forty years" of Israel in the wilderness, and the "forty days" of Elijah's journey, prevents us from laying stress on the duration of the alleged fast of Jesus. Devout believers might easily have assumed that "forty" must have been the number of the days, without any intention to deceive or to exaggerate. In any case, the number has been exceeded in modern times and is neither incredible nor a proof of divinity.

What we lay stress on is the spiritual nature of the "temptations" of this solitude. Some of these resemble those of other religious reformers; but, as a whole, what may be called their "originality" stamps them as not having been the results of accretion, or of devout imagination.

ii Jesus could not revolve in thought the records of the miracles wrought by Moses and Elijah without

be addressed to the Baptist. The Synoptists differ from one another as to the details of the baptism. The fourth Gospel makes no mention of John's baptizing Jesus, or of any voice from heaven accompanying the descent of the Spirit.

asking Himself, "Am I also to do such works? Moses brought water from the rock, and through him God gave bread from heaven; am I to do the same for myself and for those in the new Kingdom?"

The answer came, that He was not to do this. Moses and Elijah were servants: He was God's Son. But because He was the Son, He was to control the Kingdom of God by obeying its laws. The chief in the Kingdom was to be the chief in obedience. The Son of God was also Son of man, and "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister." His "bread" was to be the word and will of God.

iii Was He, then, to startle men into obedience by some striking and public act of sublime self-sacrifice, dashing Himself, as it were, against the walls that limit human nature, in order to shew His trust in the Father who is above and beyond them? Transported in a moment of imagination to the House of God in Jerusalem, He saw Himself seated on its summit in the eyes of all the people: might He cast Himself down to shew that His Father would bear Him up?

No, He was not to do this. The fixed order of Nature, taken as a whole, sun and rain, flower and fruit, seed-time and harvest, revealed the will of the Father. He was not to fight against it but to learn from it. To try to break it would be to "tempt" the Lord His God.

In this reverent attitude toward the fixed order of things as representing the will of God, Jesus seems to have differed from previous prophets and contemporaries, carrying us back to the faith of the progenitor

of His race, Abraham the friend of God, who could expostulate with what seemed to be a voice of God by an appeal to God Himself: "That be far from thee to do after this manner, to slay the righteous with the wicked: that be far from thee: shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Only, in the "seed" of Abraham, we shall find the trust in the righteousness of the Judge developed into trust in the love of the Father so absolute as to make all expostulation impossible.

iv Might He, then, so far do homage to the wisdom of this world as to use occasional simulation, or dissimulation, or connivance, so as to bring over the Pharisees to His side, and, with them, all Israel? and thus might He be allowed to effect the deliverance of His people and hasten the Kingdom of God?

No, neither might He do this. The same book of the Law that forbade the "tempting" of God said also, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." With this answer the temptation closed.[1]

§ 3

Jesus now began to expound His mission to the world. It was[2] "to preach good tidings to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."

i By "poor," He meant those who were detached in spirit from earthly possessions, esteeming righteousness

[1] In St. Matthew's Gospel. In St. Luke's, the order is different.
[2] Luke iv. 18.

as the treasure of treasures; by "the blind," those who were in the darkness of spiritual ignorance; by "captives," the captives of sin; by "release," forgiveness.

ii In His "good tidings," He proclaimed God as the merciful Father. God's "Kingdom" was to be a family. Men were to be bound together, not by a Law of authority, but by their relation to the Father of all, implying a Law of the heart. The Father (so Jesus said) took cognizance of motives, not of mere outward actions; and the only salvation for men lay in a spontaneous affection for their brethren on earth springing from a filial devotion to their Father in heaven.

iii How He proposed to impart to men this filial devotion Jesus did not make clear: He simply bade men "do" this and that, and warned them that "hearing" without "doing" was as a house built on sand. But at first He gave no clue to the method by which the power of "doing" was to be attained.

Gradually, however, it appeared that the new enabling faculty was *faith*—faith in the Father as represented by Jesus, the Son. When He proclaimed to the poor in spirit the fatherhood of God, those who had this faith fed upon His words and received strength from them. When He told the captives of sin that their chains were unbound and their sins remitted, those who trusted in Him became free, and the burden of their sins fell from their souls. By faith or trust in Him, virtue seemed to pass from Him to them and they received into their souls a new spiritual life. They became to some extent what He was, imbued with the

filial spirit: they were born again as children of the Father in heaven.

iv In fact, therefore, the secret of His power was Himself. So far as the words were concerned, there was little that was new in His doctrine. What was new was the Person animating the words and giving them power (in the hearts of those who could respond with faith) to produce a complete moral transformation. Homer sang of Zeus as the Father of gods and men. The Law and the Prophets described Jehovah as the Father of Israel. The words of Jesus revealed God to us in an entirely new character, as *His* Father. Not till we know God as *His* Father can we rightly pray to God as *our* Father.

§ 4

Crowds gathered round Him, and He was popular; yet He soon felt a sense of failure, and the failure sprang largely from what might seem to have ensured His success.

i He had a power of instantaneously curing certain diseases, especially paralysis, and that form of mental and moral disorder which was attributed to an indwelling "demon" or "spirit." This power He could exercise in an extraordinary degree, and could even transmit, to some extent, to His disciples, so that the very enemies of the early Christians admitted it. St. Paul possessed it, and assumed its possession as a matter of course.

ii But, in consequence of this power, Jesus was regarded by many as a mere "exorcist" or "caster out of devils." People flocked around Him to see His "signs," but what the "signs" betokened they neither saw nor cared to consider. Thus the "signs" overshadowed the reality and His doctrine produced little effect. There was a danger that faith in Him as the expression of the Spirit of sonship might be swallowed up by faith in Him as a wonder-working prophet. That was not the faith Jesus desired.

iii We are not to suppose that Jesus could heal, or thought that He could heal, all that came to Him. It is expressly said on one occasion that He "was not able" to do any mighty work because of men's unbelief, and this agrees with some of Christ's own words on other occasions. For example, even where he was willing to heal, He sometimes made the result expressly depend upon faith ("According to your *faith*, be it unto you").

§ 5

For a time, Jesus simply preached the good tidings and cast out devils or diseases, shewing, by many tokens, that He considered the latter a subordinate work. Sometimes, He avoided publicity in healing by taking the sufferer apart; more often, He forbade those who were healed to divulge what had happened. But even those who had faith enough to be healed had not faith enough to obey the Healer. More than once, when His popularity brought multitudes around Him, He fled

into desert places, and spent nights in communion with God.

i But the time soon came when He began to do something more than preaching and healing. In reality, He had already been doing more. He had been casting out, not merely diseases, but sins. When He was teaching, power had gone forth to heal the spiritual diseases of His listeners. The good tidings that other Prophets had predicted, He had fulfilled. When He pronounced a blessing on those who hungered and thirsted after righteousness, His very words were that blessing, bringing to His hearers the bread of life and living water; when He set forth the truth, His truth was as sight to the blind; when He proclaimed release to the captives of sin, His proclamation was in itself a release, that is to say, forgiveness. Jesus, therefore, had already, and indeed from the first, practised the forgiveness of sins.

ii But He had not yet used the words "I forgive," or "Thy sins are forgiven." The season for them was now to arrive.

It was not long after He had transgressed the Law by touching a leper to heal him.[1] Pity had forced Him

[1] Space does not permit a statement of the reasons for accepting many details in this account of what, at first sight, seems a miraculous act. Keim (*Jesus of Nazara*, Eng. Transl. vol iii. pp. 218–22) gives different explanations. To his remarks should be added that (a) the earliest Gospel (St. Mark's) probably combines two accounts of the same thing; (b) one of these is (Mark i. 42) "and straightway *the leprosy departed* from him and he was cleansed (or, purified)"; (c) the words "the leprosy," being placed in three

to the act. Far from exulting in its success, He had endeavoured to suppress all knowledge of it, and, finding that impossible, had retired into solitude. After some interval, returning to Capernaum, He found Himself in a crowded building, preaching the word of God to the multitude, in the presence of some unfriendly and critical Scribes and Pharisees. According to the earliest Gospel, His discourse was interrupted by some who let down from the roof a palsied man lying on a pallet.

The interruption might naturally have ruffled a prophet whose heart was in his message. It shewed how lightly the common people estimated the communication of the words of eternal life in comparison with faith-healing and exorcism. It was a "scandal," or stumbling-block, to all present. The Pharisees could not fail to be strengthened by it in their incredulity: "We see him in his true character, rated by his own admirers as what he is, a mere vulgar exorcist, nay, worse: an

or four different positions by good MSS., are probably a very early interpolation from Luke v. 13; (d) consequently, the original probably was, "and straightway *he* (i.e., *the leper*) *departed from him* (i.e., *from Jesus*) and was purified," that is, was subsequently purified, in the regular way, by the priests. Similarly, in Luke xvii. 14, the lepers are said to have been cleansed, not at once, but in the course of their journey to Jerusalem. Thus, the original text of St. Mark might imply that the leprosy was not healed instantaneously, but that on presenting himself to the priests, the man was found to be healed, so that he received the legal "purification."

On the other side, in favour of a metaphorical explanation, it must be said that in Matth. x. 8, xi. 5 ("cleanse lepers," "lepers are cleansed") the word appears to be figuratively used, as the apostles are nowhere described as cleansing a leper, nor does St. Matthew describe Jesus as cleansing more than one.

exorcist who would fain play the part of a prophet, and who places the Word of God below his own exhibitions." An Elijah, or other "servant" of God, might well have rebuked this irreverent interruption. But the Son of God was filled with profound pity—pity for the physical disease, pity for the spiritual paralysis that made men unable to stretch a hand to receive God's most precious gift; pity for the blindness that made the multitudes unable even to discern that gift; some pity (mixed with not a little resentment) for the blind leaders who were half-willingly blind and would not see; pity also for the poor germ of faith, pathetic in its contrast with the faith that should have existed, but still to some extent a real genuine faith in Himself as Man, apart from faith in Him as exorcist and wonder-worker.

How was He at once to vindicate the Truth, to raise the forgiveness of sins to its fit and natural position, to quicken the faith of the simple half-believer, and to convict the Pharisean faith in Rules and Explanations of being non-faith? How but by revealing to them the work that He, the Son, saw the Father at that very moment doing in heaven? The multitudes saw a paralysed body swinging from the roof in a hammock. The Son saw a paralysed soul, lying before God's throne, and crushed down with the chains of Satan. A moment more, and He beheld the Spirit breathing health into it and the Father lifting and breaking its chains. What the Father was doing above, that the Son was bound to do below. Thus, for the first time on record, the words of absolution were pronounced in the Church of Christ: "Child, thy sins are forgiven thee."

iii This is the only occasion on which Jesus uses the word here translated "child" in addressing an individual. St. Luke, alone of the Synoptists, substitutes "Man": but the substitution is unfortunate. The appellation "child," though consistent with a touch of gentle rebuke, denotes an efflux of affection in this, Christ's first utterance of the absolution of sins, which is altogether lost in the third Gospel. It helps us to realize how, as in the case of the leper, pity, and nothing but pity—yet that kind of divine pity which is combined with divine insight—may have carried Jesus beyond His former stage to a new and higher one when, in defiance of the certain hostility of the national representatives of Legalism, He went beyond the Law to proclaim, and effect, the fulfilment of the Law. The law of sin-offerings, like the law of purifications, was intended to prepare for a time when both sin-offerings and purifications should be dispensed with. Within His heart was that "fountain for sin and uncleanness" which had been predicted by prophecy; and now the pain of sorrow for man's pitiable helplessness caused the fountain to gush forth in a stream that was to purify the souls of men for ever.

§ 6

Others, beside the Pharisees, may well have been somewhat scandalized by "a prophet who took upon himself to pronounce the forgiveness of sins." The less thoughtful among His disciples or followers may have put the matter aside, as being a theological question, out of their province. But with hardly any

can this public assumption of a power of Absolution have conduced to Christ's influence as a popular leader.

Many causes contributed to make Him more and more unpopular. He alienated the Pharisees without conciliating the Galileans. The former were indignant at His allowing disciples to break the "fences" that tradition had erected around the Law of the Sabbath, and because He performed acts of healing on the Sabbath. The latter, as we may infer from the fourth Gospel, wished to make Him a king by force, that He might lead them against the Romans. These would be all the more irritated at His inaction when John the Baptist was cast into prison and the Baptist's successor made no effort to release him.

§ 7

The Synoptic Gospels record an early utterance of Jesus indicative of a sense of failure. It is in connection with the first of the parables, that of the Sower.

i After the public delivery of this parable, Jesus is said to have privately explained it to the disciples, with a pathetic repetition of the words of the prophet Isaiah, who had described his mission as being, we may almost say, "a mission to fail." The prophet represented the Word of God as bidding him, in effect, harden the heart, and darken the understandings, of his countrymen.[1] So, Jesus said[2] that He "taught in parables for this cause," that hearing men might *not*

[1] Isaiah vi. 10. [2] Mark iv. 12, Matth. xiii. 13–15, Luke viii. 10.

hear, and seeing they might *not* see and understand and be saved.

ii Possibly, the meaning of this may be that, since the multitude had not taken in His direct teaching—such, for example, as is contained in the Sermon on the Mount—He therefore resorted to a new kind of teaching, namely, that of parables, in order that all might perceive the impossibility of mechanical reception of His doctrine, and some few might think for themselves and receive the truth.

iii But, on the other hand, parabolic teaching of some sort is common in the Bible and in Jewish Tradition, and most of the parables are so clear in their main principles that a great part of the spiritual meaning seems obvious to the simplest. Hence, another explanation, derivable from the fourth Gospel, is perhaps to be preferred, namely, that *all* the sayings of Jesus were, in some sense, "parables," or "dark sayings,"[1] not only to the multitude, but to the disciples as well, until after His death, when He sent the Spirit, the other Paraclete, to guide them into all the Truth.

iv If this be so, this mysterious saying would seem originally to have applied, not to this parable (which is particularly clear), but to Christ's teaching, as a whole, up to the time when it was, as it were, reviewed, and its results summarized, and its seeming failure explained, in the Parable of the Sower. In that case, the meaning

[1] John xvi. 25. The rendering "proverbs," though based on the usage of other writers, hardly expresses the Johannine meaning.

is, not that Jesus deliberately adopted a new and obscure form of teaching in order that the many might not understand but the few might receive an esoteric interpretation; but that, as in the case of Isaiah, so in His own, it was the will of the Father that, "hearing" Him, men should "not hear," and consequently the duty of the Son to acquiesce in teaching so as to fail. The many were clay, the few were wax; the Son's doctrine was to be like fire, hardening the former while softening the latter. From "them that had not," it was the Son's mission to take "even that which they seemed to have."

Not bitterness, then, dictates these sad words, but a recognition of a divine mysterious Law—a Law full of sorrow for the present, but not on that account to be ignored. Jesus reserves for Himself the task of preparing His disciples to face the mystery of a rejected Gospel, leaving it to St. Paul to shew how its rejection by the Jews paved the way for the inclusion of the Gentiles.

§ 8

In any case, we are led by this utterance to recognize that Christ's alienation of the Pharisees and His open contravention of the Traditions they had erected round the Law were rapidly followed by disappointment upon disappointment.

i But neither disappointment, nor the shadow of impending disaster, nor even the desire to be compassionate and helpful to the multitudes who

misunderstood Him, could induce Jesus to deviate from His fixed principle of conduct and teaching, namely, that purity of heart was the one thing needful. Such asceticism as had been practised by His previous master, John the Baptist, was not for Him nor for His disciples. He discouraged fasting except so far as it sprang naturally from a sense of sorrow; He did not abstain from wine; He was present at feasts given both by Pharisees and by "publicans," and many of His parables are based on the habits of festive intercourse. Beginning with the advocacy of a *new* Law of the heart, He passed to statements which indicated that the *old* Law must be regarded as fulfilled and merged in the New: mere meats, He said, could not defile, nor mere washings purify.

ii From his prison, the Baptist sent a deputation of his disciples to Jesus appealing to Him (so it seemed) to take a more active course: "Art thou he that should come, or are we to look for another?" The refusal of Jesus, followed by the Baptist's death, might naturally cause indignation among John's followers, doubt and distrust among the Galileans, and a general falling off on the part of those who had been disposed to follow Him. At all events, we find that, when Jesus received news of the execution of John the Baptist by Herod Antipas, He withdrew from his dominions, apparently in order to avoid a similar fate.

§ 9

Up to this time, Jesus had never questioned His disciples as to their "faith" in Him and concerning Him.

In the outburst of their first enthusiasm, or in the contemplation of special works of wonder, some of them might possibly have called Him Son of David, Deliverer, Messiah (that is to say, Christ), or even Son of God: but the multitude had done almost as much, and Jesus estimated such utterances at their real worth.

i But now, in the hour of unpopularity, a wanderer in danger of arrest and death, Jesus appears to have decided that the time had come to test His own work and their faith. How far had He succeeded? How far was His task accomplished, so that, when the hour came, He might feel Himself ready to follow John the Baptist and the long line of persecuted prophets?

ii Beginning to question His disciples about the opinion of the multitude concerning Himself, and drawing them out easily in this direction, He then turned upon them with the question, "But whom say *ye* that I am?" Thus questioned, the disciples appear to have hung back. At least there was no unanimous response.

At this crisis, Simon made himself the spokesman of the rest, declaring that Jesus was the promised Messiah, or Christ, the true Son of the Father in heaven: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

iii St. Matthew[1] tells us that Jesus, in His reply, first pronounced Peter "blessed" because the Father had "revealed" it to him, and then added, "Thou art *Peter* (*Petros*, 'stone' or 'rock') and on *this rock* (*Petra*) I will build my Church." God is repeatedly

[1] Matth. xvi. 17–19.

mentioned in the Song of Moses[1] as the Rock of Israel: and God alone could be called by any Jew the Rock of the Church that was to come. But God may be viewed in various aspects. What was there that was particularly "rock-like"—that is to say, firm, unchangeable, and fundamental—in the aspect of God revealed to Peter by the Father? It was the aspect of a Father in heaven whom Peter had, so to speak, *experienced* on earth—with an experience that had become part of himself—in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Servant of servants, the incarnate Self-sacrifice. Up to that time the Father had been comparatively dead to men, because they had been dead to Him. Now the Father was made "living" in the "living" Son. The Rock was the Religion of Nature. Greece had prepared the way for it in the words, "There is nothing more like God than the man who is as righteous as man may be." Israel introduced it by presenting this "righteous man," and a disciple to confess that such a one was the Deliverer and the Son of God. Death and the Laws of Nature were to put the finishing stroke by associating this Son indissolubly with the Father in the hearts of men.

This Rock, or unchangeable basis of a spiritually natural religion—not dictated by priests but by conscience—may be called by different names or phrases. We may call it the Life of God, or the Fatherhood of God, revealed through His Word, or through what is

[1] Deut. xxxii. 3, 4 "Ascribe ye greatness unto our God. The *Rock*, his work is perfect:" (ib. 15) "Then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the *Rock* of his salvation:" (ib. 18) "Of the *Rock* that begat thee thou art unmindful."

best in humanity. But we may also call it "the unity of the Father and the Son in the Spirit," as revealed through Christ. Or we might speak of it as "Christ Himself, enthroned in the human heart by faith, as being one with the Father in the Spirit of love." The first Epistle of St. Peter[1] affords a comment on this passage, speaking of Christ as "a living stone," to whom the saints coming, also as "living stones," are "built up a spiritual house." According to this, it would seem that Jesus recognizes Peter as the first "stone" coming to Himself (the "corner-stone") in order to be built up with the rest of the "stones" into the Church. The foundation is the Rock, namely, God; not the mere name of God, lifelessly confessed, but "the living God," revealed as the Father through the Son. And the merit of Peter's confession was, that it was not a dead dogma but a living conviction—brought home to his heart by God, at the very time when Jesus stood lowest in the national judgment—that this rejected human being was both the Messiah and the Son of God. Peter's faith was faith in righteousness against authority.[2]

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 4–5.

[2] St. Matthew's Gospel also adds that to Petros, the Stone, should be given "the keys" of the new Kingdom, and that he, like his Master, should have the power of "binding" and "loosing." As a matter of fact, Peter played a prominent part in the preaching of the Gospel to both Jews and Gentiles after the death of Christ. But this very fact—combined with the omission of the saying in St. Mark's (and St. Luke's) Gospel—suggests a doubt whether the words may not have been adapted to the fact.

On the other hand, every disciple of Christ has the power of "binding" and "loosing" to that extent to which he possesses the Spirit of Christ; so that the words are in strict conformity with

2 After St. Peter's Confession.

§ 1

From this time, Jesus began to teach the Twelve that the work of His life on earth was drawing to a close. Isaiah had spoken, with apparent reference to the Messiah, of One who was to "bear" men's "griefs" and carry their "sorrows," or, as St. Matthew renders it, "took our infirmities and bore our diseases"; and Jesus had borne them. The same Deliverer was to be "wounded for our transgressions," and "bruised for our iniquities," and to be "despised and rejected of men"; and Jesus, after being wounded in heart and bruised in spirit by conflict with the sins of men, had been "despised and rejected" by those for whose sake He had been contending.

i Rejection was to be followed by humiliation, according to the words of the prophecy,[1] "The Lord God hath opened mine ear and I was not rebellious, neither turned away backwards; I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting."

spiritual Truth—as well as with the context, which seems to indicate Peter as the type of a faithful Christian. The striking originality of the words must also be considered. And their omission may be explained as the result of an erroneous supposition that the words gave Peter, as an individual, a power beyond that of the other Apostles.

[1] Is. l. 5–6.

After humiliation was to come death:[1] "As a lamb that is led to the slaughter . . . he opened not his mouth. By oppression and judgment he was taken away."

ii These and other words may explain much that is otherwise difficult in Christ's predictions of His sufferings. Recognizing that the Kingdom of God (which implied the Forgiveness of sins) could not be established but by that spiritual suffering with which He already bore the sins of His countrymen, and identifying Himself with the Man of sorrows mentioned in the prophecy, He would feel assured that all that was written by the Prophets concerning the suffering Messiah must be fulfilled in Himself. Their words implied some kind of quasi-legal condemnation followed by execution; but they did not include the special punishment of crucifixion, which, indeed, was not in use among the Jews.[2] It is probable that Jesus Himself made no such prediction. In the two passages in which St. Matthew's

[1] Is. liii. 7–8.

[2] "Take up the cross" is, however, used by Jesus (Mark viii. 34, Matth. xvi. 24, Luke ix. 23, xiv. 27)—and apparently as a proverbial expression. The probable explanation is, that, although it was a Roman punishment (inflicted, in Palestine, mostly on those whom the Romans called rebels), yet it would be very familiar to the Jews, and especially to the Galileans, owing to their recollections of crucifixions that had followed the suppression of the rebellion of Judas of Galilee (about A.D. 6). To a Roman the phrase would suggest our "going to it with a rope round one's neck"; to a Galilean patriot, "volunteering for a desperate enterprise for the sake of Israel."

Such a metaphor might be used by Jesus with no more intention of signifying literal crucifixion than of signifying literal war against the Romans. It would mean, "If any one will follow me,

Gospel thus mentions it before the event,[1] the parallel passages in St. Mark and St. Luke omit it; and "crucify" is just such a substitution as might have been made for "kill," after the event.

§ 2

But after rejection, humiliation, and death, what was to follow?

On this point the Prophets were either silent, or far more obscure than on the details of suffering. Psalm and prophecy, it is true, testified that Messiah would ultimately prevail, and that His enemies were to be made His foot-stool: and one Psalmist described Him as bidden to sit on God's "right hand" until the triumph was accomplished. But in the interval between death—if death was necessary—and the sitting near the divine throne, what was to happen was not made clear. The necessity of the case demanded some kind of resurrection: but concerning resurrection, as we have seen, the Prophets spoke at best in dark sayings or hints. Negatively, the Psalms were stronger, insisting that God would not leave the soul of His Servant "in Sheol" nor suffer His Holy One to "see corruption." Yet nothing was clear or precise. Still less was a definite time specified for the interval.

let him come as one prepared to lay down his life for Israel." But "Israel" would mean, not "Israel after the flesh," but "the Kingdom of God."

[1] Matth. xx. 19, xxvi. 2.

§ 3

To this general vagueness and obscurity in the Prophets there was one exception, more striking in appearance than in reality, but destined to have important results. It is where Hosea exhorts his countrymen to turn to the Lord in repentance[1]: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up. *After two days will he revive us; on the third day he will raise us up*, and we shall live before him. And let us know, let us follow on to know the Lord: his going forth is sure as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter rain that watereth the earth."

i There is no prediction here of a Messianic resurrection within a specified interval. As in English we speak of "two or three days," meaning "a short time," so did the Jews and the books of the Old Testament. "Yesterday and the third day," in the Hebrew Bible,[2] is often used for "two or three days ago," and is translated by the Revised Version "heretofore."

ii "Second" and "third" are not so frequently used with "day" to express a future interval: but an instance occurs in the remarkable passage where St. Luke[3] represents Jesus as saying, "Behold I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the

[1] Hos. vi. 1–3. [2] E.g. Genes. xxxi. 2, Exod. v. 7.
[3] Luke xiii. 31–33.

third day I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on my way to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following; for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem."

A literalist might here have assumed that Jesus meant that His active life on earth would consist of no more than "three days," and that He would be then "perfected," that is to say, martyred, or crucified. But the context, and what follows, shew that such an interpretation is absolutely impossible. By "the third day" Jesus simply means "soon." It is true that here, as in Hosea, there may be an allusion to the speediness of the purification, "perfection," or "revivification," to be obtained by going up to the House of the Lord from the most distant parts of Palestine, that being actually a "three days' journey." But, if so, it is merely an allusion. There is no possibility of real literalism. The meaning is "soon."

iii But, when thus naturally interpreted, and freed from any notion of miraculous coincidence of number between the days mentioned by Hosea and the days that elapsed between Christ's death and resurrection, the prophecy will be found to be just such a one as He might have used in order to impress upon His disciples, as Hosea did on his countrymen, that, come what might, not a hair of their heads would be harmed, and that even though some of them should be put to death for the sake of God's truth, they would "live before" God for ever.

iv Applying the words to Himself in the same way, He might comfort the disciples by teaching them that

the Law of Resurrection was as much a necessity for a righteous soul as the orderly sequel of the seasons, "as the latter rain that watereth the earth." The going forth of the soul from Sheol was as definitely fore-ordained, or "sure," as the going forth of the morning from the night. It was not possible that a child of God should be held by death.

v As to the interval, regarded arithmetically, sometimes Jesus might use the imagery taken from the book of Jonah and might speak of a deliverance "*after three* days and three nights": and this way of speaking, though it has never been reconciled, and is absolutely irreconcilable, with the literal accounts of Christ's resurrection contained in the Gospels—remains unaltered in several passages of the Gospel of St. Mark, the earliest of the Synoptists. At other times He might prefer the language of Hosea and say "after two days" or "on the third day." Again, at other times, He might say, as in the fourth Gospel, "*A little while*, and ye behold me not; and again, *a little while*, and ye shall see me." But in all these cases, whether mentioning numbers or not, Jesus was not dealing with arithmetical prediction, but setting forth the eternal Law of Resurrection, the fore-ordained going forth of the dawn to the soul of the child of God in the darkness of death.

vi If this explanation is correct, it is not surprising that the disciples, after their Master's death, were not prepared for His resurrection.

Jesus almost certainly did prophesy that He would

be put to death and rise from the dead, sometimes speaking of the interval as "the third day" and sometimes using the expression "after three days." And, if He had made these predictions independently of national prophecies, and apart from the language of the Prophets, His words, after their fulfilment, might well seem miraculous. But, in that case, the failure of the disciples to understand them would also be almost equivalent to a miracle.

It appears probable that, except in general terms, or else (if He mentioned particularities) in the language of one or other of the prophetic books, He never predicted His rising from the grave. The fourth Gospel, which throws Christ's predictions of His Passion into the phrases speaking of being "lifted up," and "glorified," perhaps well represents the spirit of what He said, though not attempting to give the words themselves. In that case, the trust of Jesus that, whatever might happen to Him, God would "revive him after two days and raise him up on the third day," might naturally appear to the disciples simply to denote, as indeed it did, His perfect confidence in the eventual righteous judgment of the Father. But this did not, and could not, prepare them for the visible resurrection that actually followed.

§ 4

The Galilean and other pilgrims, who were coming to Jerusalem for the Passover, were ready to welcome Jesus once more as their Deliverer; and, since a few days would now end all misunderstandings, He no longer avoided the multitude.

i He deliberately determined to make such an entry into the city as would not only fulfil a prophecy of Zechariah, but also serve for an everlasting protest against the kings of the sword on behalf of the King of Peace. Following the custom that distinguished the ancient "judges" of Israel (who "rode on white asses") from the kings of the divided Tribes and the kings of the Gentiles (who "placed trust in horses"), He came riding on an ass, amid the acclamations of the pilgrims and the children.

The Synoptists insert minute instructions from Jesus to the disciples as to the finding and bringing of the ass. St. Matthew mentions *two* animals, "an ass and a colt the foal of an ass," apparently misunderstanding the poetic iteration of Zechariah as though it meant two, instead of one in two aspects. The fourth Gospel, besides mentioning only one animal, omits all the detailed instructions, and substitutes the brief phrase, "and Jesus *found* an ass." This may imply either a casual or a deliberate "finding": but the context gives the impression that the former is meant, so far as any Messianic act could be called "casual." Obviously, the Synoptic account was open to the objection that the whole thing was prearranged by Jesus, and that any one could have fulfilled the prophecy in that way: whereas the Johannine account gives the impression of a coincidence of the casual, or quasi-casual, with the providential, which the disciples did not note till afterwards, and which then confirmed their faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

Most probably the Synoptic account is the more accurate in the letter, the Johannine in the spirit.

Before entering Jerusalem, Jesus had "found" an ass tied up in a village at a distance below the place where He stood in Bethany. It occurred to Him, or, we may say, was revealed, that this sight indicated what was to be the nature of His entry, after the manner of a Prince of Peace. He therefore sent some disciples, telling them where they would "find" it. On it He proposed to ride into the city. Thus He would rebuke the suspicions of His enemies who charged Him with sedition, and the imaginations of His followers who gladly believed Him to be seditious. At the same time, He would fulfil prophecy. But we may well believe, as the fourth Gospel leads us to believe, that the fulfilment of the letter of the prophecy was a secondary consideration.

ii As another protest, He drove out from the Temple the money-changers and sellers of sacrifices. These men, in many cases, extracted an excessive and sometimes extortionate profit from needy worshippers. It is also believed, on good authority, that extortions of this kind were countenanced by some of the chief priests in support of a lucrative monopoly which they enjoyed. Nevertheless, the necessities of the sacrificial ritual required that a vast number of sheep and oxen should be at all times collected in, or near, the precincts of the Temple. Just before the Passover, the number must have been enormous. To drive them out at such short notice might seem calculated to stop the Passover altogether. Such conduct, then, could not but bring Jesus into collision with the authorities, especially when viewed in the light of His language at this period.

iii Even the Temple was not exempt from His condemnations and threatenings. Publicly, contrasting it with the ideal Temple, the House of Prayer, He called it "a den of thieves." Privately, He declared to the disciples that every stone of it must come down. In less intelligible language, preserved only in the fourth Gospel, He had declared to the Rulers that though they might destroy "this sanctuary," He would raise it up in three days. Some pictures and commentators represent Jesus as pointing with His finger to Himself when uttering the words "this sanctuary." But a moment's reflection shews that the "finger" could hardly have been thus "pointed"—in order to be neither seen nor understood by any one at the time, but simply to be conjectured, centuries afterwards!

The Temple of the Lord of hosts—what is it but the "hosts" themselves, the congregations, not of the stars in heaven, but of those who make their hearts homes of prayer on earth? This congregation, or church, beside being the true House of God, is also described by St. Paul as being the Body of Christ: and this was the "body," or "sanctuary," that Jesus had in mind when He told the priests that they were going the way to destroy it; but, even if they succeeded, He would speedily[1] raise it up.

§ 5

Taken apart from the personality of Jesus, many of His utterances might well rouse a suspicion that He

[1] "Speedily"; for "three days" used in the sense of "speedily" see above, § 3. i. and v.

was proposing to resort to violence, and a feeling that He must be suppressed as a dangerous fanatic. His recent acts could not fail to increase such suspicion and to render it likely that His enemies would speedily arrest Him. If so, the end seemed near. We can well understand that Jesus, far from endeavouring to avoid it, resolved to go forward to meet it, and that the great question before His mind was, not about Himself, but about His disciples.

i He had recently been forced to rebuke Peter for tempting Him to withdraw His own predictions about His impending death. The rest of the Twelve had been quarrelling about precedence in the Kingdom, which they regarded as now near. Here were plain tokens that His disciples were quite unprepared for what was to come. He foresaw that one of them would betray Him. None would remain faithful. They loved Him, and to some extent trusted in Him; but they were not yet in communion with His mind. They "did not understand what Spirit they were of." They had not yet received that Power from heaven which alone could teach them how to carry on His work, when bereft of His earthly presence.

ii Again and again He endeavoured to impress on them that the Kingdom of God was other than they supposed; that everything was according to a fixed order; that this or that "*must* be"; that He could not do as He liked; that the chief places in the Kingdom were not at His disposal but in accordance with the will of the Father; and that the Father's will was

expressed by the Law of Humility or Sacrifice. Those who made themselves the humble servants of men, these, He said, would become, or rather, prove themselves to *be*, true lords of men; these would sit next the throne in the Kingdom.

Then, approaching the doctrine of sacrifice, without actually mentioning the word, He declared that the Son of man had come, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and "to give his life a ransom for many."

iii According to the fourth Gospel, He endeavoured to impress this doctrine on His disciples by solemnly washing their feet, and exhorting them to imitate His example in their relations with each other.

According to the same Gospel—and it is in conformity with the circumstances—much of His private discourse at this time, in the circle of the Twelve, turned on the gift of the Spirit which the disciples had not yet received, and which—He now perhaps began to teach them—they could not receive till He had been withdrawn from them. In the Synoptic Gospels this had been mentioned as a Spirit (or "mouth and wisdom") of such a nature as to help them to plead the cause of the Gospel against its adversaries. The fourth Gospel describes it in another aspect, as a Spirit that the world could not receive or comprehend, a Spirit that would guide them into all the Truth.

iv But no mere words of His seemed likely to keep the Twelve in the straight path, for the time, however short, during which the "night" was to come and

darkness was to sever Him from His followers. Indeed He had prepared no such legacy of words, no Law to leave behind Him, no detailed rules for life, no secrets of nature or of policy.

v Yet He had something beyond words. In Galilee, "virtue" had passed from Him to the sick and sinful, and He had been conscious of it. So now He felt that He could impart some "virtue," some gift of His presence, yes, in some sense His very self, to those of His disciples who were still faithful.

vi This, then, He bequeathed to them under the form of bread and wine. The bread He called His body, the wine His blood. Using a word that had passed from Greek into Hebrew and meant either "last will and testament" or "covenant," He declared that the bread was His body which was given for them, and the wine was the blood of His "*covenant*" or His "*testament*" which was poured out for "many."

vii There was more in this than a mere gift *to* the disciples. It was also a gift *for* them. By giving Himself *to* them, He bought them, so to speak, or drew them out of the Adversary into Himself. In other words, He may be said to have "received" them. This was in accordance with the law He Himself laid down: Whoever gives receives. Parents, who give their best selves *to* their children, sometimes find that they have thus given themselves *for* their children. They "receive" their children—that is to say, their children's hearts—in return. So Jesus, by giving His body and

blood *to* the Twelve, desired to give Himself *for* the Twelve, "receiving" them into Himself, and making them inheritors of His own eternal life. This was in accordance with that mysterious law of which the incarnate Word Himself said little, because He reserved for Himself the task of doing it, and for others the task of realizing it. The Last Supper not only typified a legacy but also conveyed the essence of the agony in Gethsemane and the Crucifixion. Together, the three acts exemplified, and supremely fulfilled, the Law of Sacrifice.[1]

[1] The Doctrine taught by the Eucharist, and the last utterances of Jesus, are considered below, in the chapter on the Doctrine of Jesus.

CHAPTER II

THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

1 The doctrine not "egotistic"

§ 1

THE preceding summary of the acts of Jesus was intended to suggest an answer to those who can find no sequence of cause and effect (unless it is a miraculous sequence) in the life of Jesus followed by the establishment of the Christian Church. "What was there," they say, "in the mere teaching of Jesus, to produce such a result? Apart from miracles, we are compelled to see in Jesus nothing more than a mere man going about Palestine, talking of a kingdom and sending his followers to proclaim it. But how could mere words establish it? And, if not by words, by what means, apart from miracles, was it to be established?"

§ 2

It will be shewn below that people who talk thus about "a mere man" fail to recognize that "a mere

man," strictly speaking, signifies "a real man," and may represent a unique man "taken into" the divine nature.[1] As to the "means," they are simple enough to define, in themselves; but they are inseparable from the unique personality of Jesus. Defined, however, they consist of the following gifts bestowed by Him on His followers—

1st, faith in God the Father as He is represented by Jesus the Son.

2nd, regeneration, that is to say, a new and spiritual creation of the machinery of motive within us, or, to use a better metaphor, such a communication of the Spirit of the Father and the Son as to create a new life while leaving personal identity.

3rd, a power, in the believer, of transmitting to others a forgiveness of sins similar to that which he has himself received.

§ 3

We all have faith—of a kind. In all of us, our nature so changes from infancy to old age that we are, in some sense, regenerate, or born again, perhaps more than once. Some possess a consciousness, more or less dim, of a faculty of forgiving and receiving forgiveness; few or none, perhaps, are without the faculty itself. But the peculiarity about Christian faith, regeneration, and forgiveness, is, that they are imbued with the Spirit of Christ.

[1] Comp. the expression in the Athanasian Creed: "taking of the Manhood into God."

§ 4

But some heterodox critics of the Gospel, because they reject the miraculous, feel bound to reject the extraordinary, which is quite a different thing.

i They will not believe, for example, that Jesus claimed a new authority to forgive sin; or that He bade the sinners of Galilee come to Him for rest and relief from their heavy burdens; or that He predicted, even in the vague and mysterious language of Hosea, that His impending death would be followed by some kind of "raising up"; still less that He prophesied a future judgment of mankind in which He Himself should sit as judge. Such language they think "*egotistic in a 'mere man'*"; and in this last utterance many of the orthodox concur with them, adding, however, "But it was not egotistic in Jesus, because He was not a 'mere man.'"

ii It is contended in this treatise that the Eternal Logos *did* become, on earth, "a *mere* man," though, at the same time, divine "by taking of the Manhood into God." "Mere" means "unmixed." And we maintain that the Word of God, becoming incarnate, did not make any "confusion of substance," that is to say, did not mix, or confuse, the human with the divine, making a mysterious amalgam of the two; but that His humanity was real, genuine, and unmixed—not endowed with any such powers, physical or mental, as would take it out of the human category.

iii Spiritually, however, every "mere man" is more or less one with God, so far as he possesses a share of the divine Spirit of love and pity. In Jesus, we believe that there was present, not "a share," but the whole of the divine Spirit, which is another way of saying that His "manhood" was totally taken into God, or that we believe Him to be perfectly one with the Father and the Spirit and perfectly divine.

"Then Jesus differed from Gautama only in degree?"

Is not such a phrase as "in degree" likely to mislead us when pressed in a literal application to the Spirit? Does the Spirit of the Father Himself differ from the same Spirit, in us, "in degree"? And, if so, should we say that the Father differs from a mortal but regenerate man "in degree" alone? It may be that there is a truth in such words. Steam, perhaps, may be said to differ from warm water only "in degree." However, the great point is to recognize that Jesus was "a mere man," and yet that His manhood was "wholly taken into God," and so associated with the Father that the Father is best worshipped by worshipping Jesus Christ as His Son.

§ 5

"But," it has been remarked to the author, "you do not make it at all intelligible to me how a casual townlad of Nazareth, though the most innocent and susceptible of youths, should grow quite naturally into the consciousness of being the Son of God, the Incarnate Word."

For "Nazareth" read "Stratford on Avon," and for "innocent" read "observant"; and the weakness of such an objection will be patent. Who says Shakespeare was "casual"? Certainly no materialist. Probably not many theists. Again, Jesus was "innocent," as Shakespeare was (no doubt) "observant." But both were a great deal more. Such rhetoric as this might be used to shew that the development of Mohammed or Gautama or Zoroaster was "not at all intelligible."

Do not objections of this kind spring from a misunderstanding of what is implied in evolution? It has been said above that "evolve," "inspire," and "create," might all describe, in different aspects, the sculptor evoking from the marble the image of the ideal that he has, as it were, first transferred from his mind into the unhewn stone, and is now attempting to release from its imprisonment. How often must we repeat that "evolve" no more dispenses with a sculptor than "inspire" dispenses with art and "create" dispenses with tools and time!

In one sense, no doubt, the "growing up" of Jesus is "not at all intelligible." But the same may be said about the development of the most "casual town-lad" that ever breathed. The most common-place youth draws something inexplicable from "the abysmal depths of personality," and is not "intelligible" in the sense in which a machine is. How much less can the "growing up" of Moses, Isaiah, or Jesus, be made, in such a sense, "intelligible," without regard to the Spirit of God immanent in each!

We contend that Jesus, being from the first (in a

spiritual sense, and quite apart from the truth or falsehood of any Miraculous Conception) the Son of God, in unique communion with the Father, and thinking and acting from the first in the Spirit of perfect Sonship, "grew naturally"—under the influences of antecedents and environment—into the consciousness of powers of forgiving, healing the soul, suffering for sinners, dying for sinners, rising again, continuing for ever the work that the Father had given Him to do: and that all this was as "natural" as that Shakespeare—also under the influences of antecedents and environment—first "grew into the consciousness" that Hamlet had to be written, and then wrote it.

§ 6

Those who attack Christ's doctrine as egotistic, and those who regard it as spurious because, if genuine, it would imply egotism, seem not to give sufficient weight to the following considerations:

i The coincidence of the first three Gospels (which agree in commending to us, as being part of the earliest tradition, some of the very utterances of Jesus to which they object).

ii The fact that Jesus, though always recognizing the spiritual Law, nevertheless spoke as a Jew, and therefore must have believed (subject to that Law or Will) in the general fulfilment of the prophecies of Israel.

iii The profound communion with the Father in heaven, and that consequently overwhelming consciousness at once of power and of pity, which carried Jesus far above all possibilities of egotism into a conviction, justified by results, that He had a divine power to impart peace and forgiveness to every sinner who had faith enough to cast his burden upon Him.

iv The fact that He whom they describe as a "mere man" was, at all events, a man who (as hardly any deny) gave His "body" and His "blood" to, and for, His disciples—surely an extraordinary act, which might prepare us for extraordinary doctrine.

Non-Christian objectors may claim a logical liberty to call Jesus a fanatic; and indeed He appears to be either fanatical or unique. But it does not seem logical to admit that Jesus actually uttered words of the tenor imputed to Him in the Lord's Supper, and yet to assert that He "could not have uttered" other words of a similar tendency.

§ 7

The charge of "egotism," when analysed, appears to be based on the assumption that one who in birth and life was subject to the laws of human nature, one who habitually chose for himself the title of "the Son of man"—an appellation used by Hebrew Prophets and Psalmists to express man with all his physical infirmities and limitations—could not feel himself to be so completely inspired with the filial Spirit towards God

that he knew himself to contain the saving principle for mankind, the secret of salvation.

i Once eradicate this prejudice, and it will be felt that Jesus said nothing at all beyond what was fit and reasonable when He bade the heavy-laden world come to Him for rest; when He said that He—even He, though He was the "Son of man"—had "power *on earth* to forgive sins"; and when, on the night before His death, He bequeathed Himself, His perpetual presence, to the disciples from whom He was on the point of parting.

ii The question is largely one of fact, not of faith alone. Did Jesus possess a power of giving rest and peace to weary humanity? Events went far to prove that He did. But, if He did, how could He do otherwise than call the world to accept what He had to give?

iii In reality, we have seen that this giving of rest and peace to the sinful could only be effected by taking their burdens on Himself. It is a phenomenon of daily occurrence that the spiritually strong and good have the painful power of taking upon themselves the burdens of the spiritually weak and bad. This so-called "egotism," then, was really only another way of saying that "the Son of man came, not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

§ 8

It may be urged that, instead of saying "Come unto me," Jesus might have said, "Come unto the Father."

But God was known as "the Father" already by Greeks as well as Jews, readers of Homer as well as readers of the Law.

The whole point of Christ's Gospel consisted in its bringing a *new* revelation of the Father, and of the Father's love. When enjoining on the disciples the duty of love, Jesus describes it in the fourth Gospel as being "the love wherewith I have loved you." Without these words, His commandment had no new meaning. So it was with the whole of the Gospel.

A letter does not become egotistic because it is couched in the first person, or cease to be egotistic because couched in the third. Egotism implies false judgment about self. We contend that Christ's self-judgment was true. Personal His doctrine was bound to be: egotistic it was not.

2 *The doctrine of the Kingdom*

§ 1

Jesus taught that the Law and the Prophets had for their object the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

i In this, as in the rest of His doctrine, general rather than particular truths were inculcated, insisting on the relation between cause and effect in the spiritual Kingdom—between sowing and reaping; between giving and receiving; between having a nucleus and receiving more; acting without the light of inward conviction

and acting wrongly; forgiving and being forgiven; "judging" our brother and thereby converting the Father into a "Judge"; building on deeds and ensuring stability, building on words and ensuring ruin.

ii The fundamental doctrine of Jesus about the Kingdom was that God could never be King till He was worshipped as "our Father," and could never be worshipped as "our Father" until men were loved by the worshipper as brothers. Hence, He regarded the Law and the Prophets as having no other object than to prepare for a brotherhood in Israel under the Fatherhood of God.

iii It was apparently with this aim that Jesus wished to "fulfil" the Law and the Prophets. His whole life was the expression of the words of His own prayer "Thy Kingdom come": and, except as a preparation for brotherhood, the Law seemed to Him valueless.

§ 2

But respect for constituted authority and national law is, in itself, a rudimentary training for social union. Jesus neither broke, nor taught others to break, any ordinances of the Levitical Law. To do that, among Jews, and before any new Law was ready to take the place of the old, would have been to encourage an irreverence that would have been a bad preparation indeed for any permanent brotherhood.

i He did not abrogate the Sabbath, but only declared that if works of mercy were allowed on that day for the sake of beasts, they ought also to be allowed for the sake of men. Even the minute distinctions of meats He did not attempt to cancel. He taught, indeed, that motives, not meats, "defile the man"; but it is morally certain that He would have rebuked any disciple who ventured to eat forbidden food by way of shewing his superior enlightenment. The Scribes and Pharisees, He said, sat in Moses' seat. Their spirit was to be shunned, because they said and did not: but their precepts were to be obeyed. Mint, anise, and cummin, might be tithed, nay, they ought to be tithed, though "mercy and judgment" were to take the first place.

Yet He quoted, with seeming approval, the precedent of David's apparent sacrilege in taking the sacred shewbread for himself and his followers: and it is a natural inference that, if a disciple of His own had eaten swine's flesh to preserve himself from starvation, Jesus would have approved his conduct.[1]

ii His doctrine being that the Levitical Law was intended to lead men by degrees to the knowledge of

[1] Codex Bezae inserts between Luke vi. 4 and 6 a saying of Jesus about a man working on the Sabbath, "If thou knowest what thou doest, blessed art thou; but if thou knowest not, cursed art thou and a transgressor of the Law." The same Codex, supported by some Latin Fathers and other inferior authorities, inserts between John vii. 52 and viii. 12 a story about an adulteress left unpunished by the Jews after their appeal to Jesus. Both stories represent Him as abrogating the Law in a manner for which no precedent can be found in the genuine Gospels.

the loving-kindness of God, it followed that all its ordinances were subordinate to the Law of kindness in the highest sense. The old Law was not to be regarded as perfect. On the subject of divorce, He expressly taught that Moses permitted a temporary laxity because of "the hardness of men's hearts." And a similar explanation might apply to Levitical purifications and distinctions of food: they were allowed, it might be said, for a time, in order to keep men in mind of the need of higher invisible purifications.

iii It may be urged that some of the commandments, for example, that forbidding murder, can never be abrogated, never subordinated, even to "the Law of kindness."

But when the State kills a criminal for the sake of the public good, is not the particular law against "killing" subordinated to the general Law of "justice," that is to say, to the Law that bids us "do the best for all," which is the highest form of "kindness?" And similarly as to the rest. So far as they are inviolable, their inviolability proceeds from the fact that they cannot be violated without violating the great Law of Justice or divine Love. On the whole, common sense seems to side with St. Paul, in whose words we may say that "love, or charity, or loving-kindness, is *the fulfilment of the Law*." [1]

[1] The emphasis laid by Jesus on brotherly love may be illustrated by an interesting passage from the teaching popularly attributed to an Indian moralist of the fifteenth century, who lays the same stress on "kindness" that Demosthenes laid on "action": "Cling to truth and mercy. *Be kind, be kind, be kind.* Be not satisfied with formal worship at the fixed times when the gong boats, but be

§ 3

Yet, however often Jesus may have protested that He came to fulfil the old Law, He nevertheless described His doctrine as "new." Nothing but disaster, He said, would ensue both to the old and to the new, if an attempt were made to repair the garment of literal legalism with a "patch" of new morality. The whole of the old Law was to be made moral—to be "fulfilled" in that sense, and in no other. Changing the metaphor, we may say that the process was to be one, not of supplementing, but of vitalizing; or we may say that the ideal Law, latent within the literal, was to be evoked into an independent existence.

§ 4

Some of Christ's precepts may have been specially adapted for the use of those disciples whom He sent out to proclaim the Kingdom; but the spirit of His doctrine was the same for all His followers. Men were to combine wisdom with innocence, to take every advantage of their knowledge of men and things, and to use all Nature for the purposes of brotherhood.

In particular, He noted the immense influence

worshipping night and day, where an unseen gong ever calls with a sound like thunder, where there is neither Veda nor Koran, where the pure Essence rests in the sky depths, and where the Sadh (Saint) in thought dwells. So will you escape illusion and gain liberation. Few learn the secret of rest and peace. He who tastes it can alone realize its comfort. With each breath he drinks in, and is drunk with, the divine love." *Gazetteer of Ulwur*, p. 62, by Major P. W. Powlett, Trübner 1878.

exercised on humanity by little children. What had been the chief cause of this? Not, we may be sure, any merely negative characteristic; not their ignorance, their waywardness, not even their innocent helplessness. The secret of their power seemed to lie in a kind of faith, a simple, direct trustfulness that had from the beginning softened and civilized mankind. His followers, then, were to become as "little children," to meet hostility with a trustful appeal for kindness, and to disarm violence by unresisting goodwill.

§ 5

Faith, above all things, seems to have commended itself to Jesus as the appointed means for entering the Kingdom—faith, that is to say, in God, the righteous, just and merciful Father, faith in a God who would not insist on obedience to any rules that were contrary to the fundamental principle of loving-kindness.

i Sinners, welcoming in faith the "good news" of such a Father, brought home to their hearts by One who was the incarnation of the filial Spirit, received a simultaneous power to lead new lives, and to shake off sins. Some of them shook off diseases as well. When that happened, Jesus sometimes expressly said that it was faith that "saved them." But whether He said it or not, He appears always to have assumed it. Such a faith was faith in the Father, but in the Father as represented by the Son. Consequently it was faith in Jesus Himself.

ii This faith is an entirely different feeling from the assurance that may be felt by a man praying for something that he longs for, irrespectively of its being good or bad for others, and confident (even to certainty) that his prayer will be granted—a feeling that may obviously be in some cases selfish and detestable. Nor again is it the same as a belief in the truth of a number of propositions about Christ's nature and actions and power, and about God's method of redeeming mankind. The possibility of such a faith as this last had not yet arrived.

iii It is, possibly, for this reason—namely, the existence of different kinds of this feeling, all included under one name—that the fourth Gospel never uses the word "faith" or "belief." Recognizing that faith, like love, is good or bad, according to its object, and perhaps perceiving a danger that the Church might fall into a wrong kind of "faith" or "belief," the evangelist prefers to use nothing but the verb "believe"—which suggests to us the question, "Believe in what? Or believe in whom?" Logically, the noun "belief" ought to suggest the same question. But it does not. Nouns are only the *names* of things: but they have a wonderful tendency to usurp the *places* of things.

§ 6

It may be objected that Jesus Himself set no limits to the wonder-working power of faith, encouraging His disciples to believe that it would enable them to uproot mountains and sycamores. How erroneous this objection is, and how patent the misunderstanding on which

it is based, will appear later on when we consider His doctrine on Prayer.

Meantime, it may be pointed out that He was no optimist in the common sense of the word. From the first He taught that the world was full of evil; that an "adversary," or an "evil one," was contending against God; that the entrance into the Kingdom implied an effort to which all would not be equal; and that the keenest sufferings and trials awaited Himself and His disciples before the consummation could be attained.

§ 7

As He proceeded in His course and met with rejection from class after class of His countrymen, other truths become more prominent, or appear for the first time in the Synoptic record: that, since "faith" implied "salvation," the faithful, whether Jew or Gentile, must be included in the Kingdom; that the mission to the Gentiles was not for Him but for the disciples; that, so far as His countrymen and His own mission were concerned, many would be called but few chosen; that His life on earth was to terminate in a violent death, in accordance with the prophecies interpreted as referring to a suffering Messiah; that, after His death, there must be a Judgment, such as had been described in the books of the Prophets, and especially in that of Daniel.

i Some of the detailed expressions in this series of doctrines cannot be relied on as coming from Jesus Himself. There was a natural tendency in the earliest Christians, after Christ's death, to read into His words

a meaning only subsequently apparent, and then to adapt the words to that meaning. Or they may have combined earlier sayings with later ones, so as to produce sometimes a wrong impression. Above all, if the risen Saviour, manifesting Himself to His disciples in wonderful ways on the hills and by the waters of Galilee, communicated to them, through visions and voices, new truths to prepare them for their mission to the world, it is obvious that the insertion of any of these post-resurrectional utterances in the mass of Christ's earlier doctrine might create confusion.

ii These considerations may apply to some of the parables and other statements about the relations between the Jews and Gentiles. But, on the whole, we see in the Gospels such a development of doctrine as we may call—having regard to the uniqueness of the Person—natural. And this affords internal evidence that, in its general outline, the account of the doctrine is historically true.

§ 8

Along with the growth of Christ's unpopularity, we seem to be able to trace a corresponding growth in the emphasis with which He exalts the new Kingdom. In it, He said, the least would be greater than the greatest of those who had gone before. The least in the Kingdom of God was to be superior even to John the Baptist. Yet the Baptist He declared to be greater than any of the Prophets. Hence it seemed inevitably

to follow that the least in the new Kingdom was to be greater than Elijah, greater than Moses.

i This doctrine, in appearance "egotistic," was in reality an attempt to impress upon the disciples an absolutely new standard of spiritual rank, based on a new conception of spiritual personality. Jesus was not speaking of individual merit, but of spiritual level. As a child of twelve may be called superior in scientific level to the astronomers of the days of Aristotle or Ptolemy, so the simplest receiver of the Spirit of Jesus in the new Kingdom was to be superior to the spirit of Elijah or Moses in the old.

ii But when "the old" is mentioned, it is used to signify the things that *were*. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob—what they once *were*, they *are* not now. God *is* their God, and "He is not the God of the dead but of the living." Therefore, to use Hosea's phrase, they "live before him," that is to say, before His face, and in His view,—in the view of Him who sees things as they *are*, eternally real. The Patriarchs therefore *are*: and consequently they are in the kingdom; for it includes everything that *is*. Abraham, we are told in the fourth Gospel, looked forward to see the Kingdom, and "he saw it and was glad." By this it is implied that Abraham was drawn into an eternal relationship with the Father through the Son, so that he became one of those who *are*. Elijah, also, is described by the Synoptic Gospels as not what he *was*. He has come again, to prepare the way for the Kingdom. The personalities of men consist in their eternal relations

with God, and their relationship with God is their life and being.

iii Was there to be, then, no distinction between the less and the greater in the new Kingdom? Yes, but not such a one as the world supposed. So far as rivalry was concerned, there were to be no distinctions, for all would be one in the Father. But so far as capacity for spiritual service was concerned, there were to be distinctions innumerable. Thrones were placed nearer to, or further from, the throne of the Supreme, in proportion to the faculty of serving and suffering. These places were not to be given by favour, but awarded by Law, the Law of Truth, the Will of the Father who fixed the order of things. It was because Jesus felt in Himself the very Spirit of serving and suffering, and identified it with the Spirit of Sonship, that He could not help calling Himself the Son.

§ 9

This may explain why Jesus shrank from calling Himself the Messiah, yet led His disciples to call Him so.

There is spiritual truth in representing that the only person to whom He directly revealed His Messiahship at an early date was a Samaritan woman of bad reputation, who may, perhaps, be supposed to have been comparatively free from Jewish preconceptions. To have said to Jews, "I am the Christ," might have led some to reply, "Then you must have been born at Bethlehem;" others, "Then you must begin to beat

the nations in pieces like a potter's vessel;" others, in various ways, to reduce a living personality to a dead letter. The object was to induce His countrymen to vitalize the letter by associating it with a living Person. He knew that He was not such a Messiah as His countrymen expected. Yet He knew Himself to be the Redeemer predicted by the Prophets, and He gradually led His disciples to accept Him as such in their hearts, not as being a worker of marvels or a teacher of deep truths, but as being the supreme representation of the fatherly loving-kindness of God.

3 The doctrine of Judgment and Prayer

§ 1

From the moment of St. Peter's confession, Jesus began to predict that He would (1) die, yet (2) be "raised up," and, later on, that (3) the Son of man would be seen by the nations, coming on the clouds, and sending His angels to gather together the elect from every quarter of the earth. This last prediction, taken into consideration with its context, and with various references to "judging" and "judgment" in the book of Daniel and in the New Testament, implies a separation of the good from the bad, and a "judgment" of the latter. Or we may say it implies a "judgment" of all, but a condemnation of the bad alone.

The two former predictions have been explained above; and the third is capable of explanation (even

apart from the predictions in the book of Daniel) if we distinguish picturesque emblem from spiritual fact, and realize what "judgment" really means. It could not be but that the new Kingdom and the new Spirit, if rejected, would confront the old, "judging" and convicting till the latter passed away.

The new Kingdom would be visibly expressed by the Twelve on "twelve thrones," and the Master in their centre. But there is no ground for assuming that Jesus foresaw such details as that Matthias would be co-opted by the Eleven, and Paul appointed as a thirteenth, and Barnabas, and others less distinguished, added to the number. It was the Spirit of the Twelve, or His own Spirit in the Twelve, which He foresaw judging the world and convicting it of unbelief.

Thus the language of the Synoptists about the Son of man on the clouds of heaven, or about the disciples on thrones judging the tribes of Israel, agrees in reality with that of the fourth Gospel about the Spirit that was to come after Christ's death and "convict" the world concerning sin, and righteousness, and judgment. The metaphor is entirely different, the essence, spiritually, the same.

§ 2

As Jesus drew towards the end of His course, the Synoptic records of His doctrine on prayer become more frequent and more emphatic. He spoke of it as an intense volition giving insight into, and co-operating with, the will of the Father, and capable of accomplishing vast spiritual results.

i More especially was this to be the case when individual aberrations were corrected—or perhaps we may say more accurately, when that which was best and truest in the individual was vivified and strengthened—by praying in co-operation with others. Whatsoever "two or three" prayed for in the name of the Son of God, that, He said, would be performed by God.

ii This doctrine seems, at first sight, startling. But it assumes that we desire, and pray for, nothing disorderly, nothing irregular, nothing selfish: every wish is to be subordinate to the will of the Father in heaven. Duly weigh the meaning of this assumption, and, so far from being startling, the doctrine will seem to be reduced to a nullity.

For the logical sequel would be to give up prayer: "We must not interfere with God. Let Him do His will. Let us rejoice where we can, and acquiesce where joy is impossible. It is not for us to pray."

iii Such a conclusion Jesus no more approved of than we should approve of a similar conclusion applied to action: "We must not interfere with God. Let Him do His will. Let us rejoice or acquiesce. It is not for us to act." To Him it was as much a matter of experience that man can co-operate with God in prayer, as it is with us that man can co-operate with God in action. Hence, Jesus taught the disciples that by prayer, in faith, they could uproot "sycamore trees" and cast "mountains" into the sea.

But we know, 1st, that He never uprooted trees or cast down mountains; 2nd, that He never (apart from

the words under discussion) encouraged His disciples to attempt such tasks; 3rd, that to "cast down mountains" (of spiritual doubt) and to "uproot fig-trees" (of vice and error) were current Rabbinical phrases; 4th, that this very language about "trees" and "mountains" was used in connection with a request of the disciples for more "faith" to enable them to "forgive sins"—in other words, to "uproot fig-trees."

Consequently, there is every reason for supposing that here (as elsewhere) Jesus never contemplated for a moment the conversion of prayer into an instrument for "miraculously" changing that fixed order in non-human Nature which He regarded as the will of the Father. The contrary supposition has arisen, in part from a Western prosaic interpretation of Eastern poetic expression, in part from an exaggeration—common to the East with the West—of the spiritual significance of sudden, vast, and violent physical phenomena.

§ 3

Passing to Christ's later doctrine, we find in it a predominance of what may be called "Parables of Rejection" and "Parables of Watching," the latter of which lay stress upon the uncertainty as to the time of the Day of the Lord.

i In this period, too, come invectives against the "Scribes" and "Pharisees" so vehement in their nature that we need all our faith in Jesus, and more than common insight into His views of things, to prevent ourselves from "stumbling." He called

them a "generation of vipers." "Serpent" or "dragon" was a name given to the enemy of mankind: and such "serpents" as these—the brood of "the adversary"—Jesus had in mind when He said to the disciples,[1] "Behold I have given you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy." In effect, therefore, this was equivalent to the saying in the Johannine Gospel, "Ye are of your father, the devil."

ii So apparently cruel a charge becomes justifiable when, and only when, it proceeds from a divine Pity that is "cruel only to be kind."

Doubtless, it is hard for us to understand how such a condemnation can have in any way benefited, or been "kind" to, the Pharisees. On the contrary, it would seem calculated to infuriate them, quickening the spark of evil purpose into a flame, and destroying the last hope of their conversion to better things. But it may be that, in the great mass of those whom Jesus thus addressed, the spark had long become an inextinguishable conflagration. There was no hope for them "in this world," or, if any, only such a hope as might spring up long afterwards, when their minds had been touched by suffering, in a time of some visitation of God, when each one went "into an inner chamber to hide himself"; as befell the false prophet who had derided the words of Micaiah the son of Imlah, and who found out, but very late, "which way went the Spirit of the Lord."

[1] Luke x. 19.

iii For the Pharisees, perhaps, these words were equivalent to a sentence of death. But a sentence of death passed in accordance with a wise Law is kind, after the manner of divine kindness, that is to say, kind to the community as a whole. And the nation and church of the Jews may have absolutely needed this stern kindness.

iv Indeed, is it not needed even now? How few there are who realize that there is no evil in the world so fatal in its ultimate results as a conventionalized and corrupted form of a once pure religion. The prophets prophesy falsely and take away the key of knowledge; the priests bear rule by their means and add to the burdens of the people; and the people themselves, through familiarity with falsehood, learn first to tolerate, then to acquiesce, and lastly to embrace it. Hypocrisy in holy things does no outward harm at first and causes no trouble to governments and statesmen. But if the old are narrowly and conventionally religious, the better natures of the young, seeing through the deception, incline towards a broad and sincere irreligion, until they, in turn, succumb to the necessities of social respectability, and become, by a natural reaction, worse and more conscious hypocrites than their fathers before them. Thus, in each generation, there is an accelerated movement towards the dissolution of authority in the old, reverence in the young, and vital morality in all. The mischief is the more deadly because it brings death at first by such imperceptible steps; and the depth of the final downfall into vice and impurity is proportioned to the purity and height of the ancestral faith.

v If this be so, a believer in Evolution, who believes in it as an instrument of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, may recognize a mysterious instance of the subordination of evil to good in this monumental condemnation of religious hypocrisy, while, at the same time, he admits the painful reality of evil, and the fact that it often seems to be, for a time, intensified by the good that is making war against it, according to the words of Jesus: "For judgment am I come into the world, that they that see not may see, and they that see may become blind."

§ 4

The last continuous discourse of Jesus treats of the final "Judgment" and borrows largely from the language and imagery of the book of Daniel.

i Two distinct streams of tradition are here manifest. St. Mark and St. Luke place here [1] a good deal that is placed by St. Matthew, not in the parallel passage,[2] but at an earlier period, namely,[3] where Jesus is said to have sent the Twelve on their first Mission through Palestine. Moreover, the third Gospel [4] contains signs of additions made after the capture of Jerusalem.

ii Consequently, we do not know what were the exact words of the original discourse, though we have good grounds for believing that Jesus predicted the

[1] Mark xiii. 9–13, Luke xxi. 12–19. [2] Matth. xxiv. 9–14.
[3] Matth. x. 17–22. [4] Luke xxi. 20, 24.

destruction of the Temple, judgment upon the nation, and an ultimate judgment upon the world. But concerning two special utterances we may say that their difficulty is an indication that they have probably been reported correctly: 1st,[1] "This generation shall not pass away until all these things be accomplished," 2nd,[2] "Of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

The omission of the latter in St. Luke's Gospel, being easily explained by its being considered derogatory to "the Son," is, under these special circumstances, rather favourable than otherwise to the genuineness of the words: and, taken together, these two sayings confirm the belief that Jesus had not, and did not profess to have, exact fore-knowledge of the details of the future, and that He prophesied in accordance with insight into general and unchangeable laws.

§ 5

On the other side, it may be urged that in the words "this generation," Jesus *does* commit Himself to an exact prediction of time within certain limits.

i Futile attempts have been made to evade the definiteness of the words by suggesting that "generation" may here mean "the race of man" or "mankind." It would be preferable to suppose that Jesus, with a prophetic "second sight," did actually see the epoch-making judgment which was to introduce the new

[1] Mark xiii. 30, Matth. xxiv. 34, Luke xxi. 32.
[2] Mark xiii. 32, Matth. xxiv. 36.

"age," coming within the life-time of those who stood round Him; and it is in the highest degree natural that He should have included in this "judgment" the downfall of Herod's Temple, the "den of thieves." But this does not remove the difficulty of the words "*all* these things," unless we suppose that the "judgment" that took place within that "generation" fulfilled all that Jesus predicted.

ii It must be confessed that the combination of two traditions, possibly uttered at different times and referring to different events, renders interpretation more than usually difficult and uncertain. It may be that Jesus regarded the world as destined to be judged in one continuous act, represented symbolically in the three Gospels by the picture of the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven, but spiritually in the fourth, as the act of the Spirit of Sonship which, after the death and resurrection of the Son, was henceforth to be in the world, yet not of the world, convicting it of sin, and either condemning or converting it. This view is certainly favoured by the general tenor, as well as by special passages, of the fourth Gospel.

4 *The last words of Jesus*

§ 1

Christ's institution of the Eucharist, regarded as an act and in connection with the meaning of the act, has

been considered above. It remains to consider some of the expressions used in the course of the act. And here we are confronted with variations and obscurities in the evidence, resulting in doubt as to the precise nature of the utterance.

i The two earliest of the Gospels (St. Mark's and St. Matthew's) contain no words that indicate Christ's intention that the rite was to be repeated "in remembrance" of Him. The third Gospel (St. Luke's) is popularly supposed to contain the precept of repetition. But many ancient authorities reject it, and it is printed as an interpolation by Westcott and Hort.

ii There is little doubt that the precept, if interpolated, is borrowed from St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians,[1] where the Apostle says that he received "from the Lord," concerning the Lord's Supper, that which he delivered to the Corinthians. He proceeds to quote the words of Jesus: "This is my body which is for you" (or, as some authorities read, "is broken for you"), "this do in remembrance of me": and then, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

iii For the first moment, this seems conclusive. But a second moment's consideration suggests many questions that must be answered before any conclusion is possible. (1) How comes it that St. Paul's report of the words differs from the accounts in the first two

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 23.

Gospels? (2) Ought we to allow the thirteenth, or fourteenth, of the Apostles, who had never seen Jesus in the flesh, to override the authority of those who were actually present at the Lord's Supper, or who derived their knowledge from eye-witnesses of it? (3) Moreover, St. Paul was writing, not a Gospel, but a letter—one perhaps among a multitude written in the course of his busy life as a missionary—whereas the authors of the Gospels may be supposed to have written deliberately. (4) And may not the former, even if he had superior knowledge, have quoted the words of Jesus as freely and loosely here as he quotes the words of the Law and the Prophets habitually elsewhere? (5) Do the words "received from the Lord" necessitate the supposition of an oral utterance (or a spiritual utterance leaving on St. Paul the effect of an oral one) proceeding directly from the risen Saviour Himself? In the Acts of the Apostles,[1] St. Paul is introduced as declaring that Christ uttered to him words very similar to those which, in another portion of the book, are said to have been uttered by Ananias, sent to St. Paul by Christ. If the principle of *qui dicit per alium* prevails in that case, why may it not prevail in this? (6) The same words, "in remembrance," are connected by the Septuagint[2] with the institution of the Shewbread. May it not have been revealed to St. Paul that the old covenant of the Shewbread (often called "bread of the Face," or "bread of the Presence")

[1] Acts xxvi. 16, to be compared with Acts xxii. 15. Compare also Acts ix. 15.

[2] Lev. xxiv. 7. The Hebrew connects the words with the "frankincense;" the Greek, apparently, with the "bread."

was to be replaced by the new covenant of the Face, or Presence, of Christ: and that now, as then, the bread was to be regarded as "bread in remembrance"?

iv On the whole, while admitting the cogency of these objections against any confident assumption that St. Paul has preserved the exact words of institution, we may feel a reasonable assurance that he has preserved their spirit, as it was intended by God to be imparted to the Church: and this, for the following reasons.

The early date of St. Paul's letter, the quiet assumption that there is nothing to contradict that which he "delivers (as tradition)" to the Corinthians, and the internal evidence afforded by what we may call its "casual" nature (utterly unlike the fabrication, or exaggeration, of a biassed historian), all combine to shew that he is introducing no novelty, but simply explaining, with spiritual insight, the divine purpose in a rite of which the Western Churches had perhaps hardly grasped the significance—a rite that had been in use from the first, among Christ's immediate disciples, who, though they had not preserved the Saviour's exact words, had preserved their intention, namely, to bestow on His orphaned followers something corresponding to the Bread of the Face, a Bread of the Real Presence. His tradition,—under the inspiration, perhaps, of one of the many visions and voices that he received from Christ—he may have connected with the old Covenant of the Shewbread, and expressed the connection in a phrase taken from that Greek account of the Levitical rite which would be more familiar than the Hebrew to the Christians of the West.

v This does not commit us to the belief that Jesus, as a man on earth, foresaw the long line of centuries that would elapse during which His followers would celebrate His Eucharist, not only as a sacrifice of the human to the Divine, but also as a commemorative antidote against the faithless disappointment that mutters sometimes, even in the believer's heart, "My Lord delayeth his coming." We may find reason to think it probable that He was no less ignorant on this point than on that other of which He said that "No man knoweth it, no, not the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only."

It may be that, in that moment of ineffable self-sacrifice, a thousand or thousands of years were to the Son, as they are said to be to the Father in heaven, but as one day or as one moment, and that He felt Himself to be imparting Himself, the very essence of the Divine nature, to all mankind for all eternity in a gift that was above the limitations of time.

§ 2

But what are we to infer from the mysterious words, inserted by all the Synoptists, in which Jesus declared that He would no more drink of the fruit of the vine until He drank it new in the Kingdom of God?

i Taken by themselves, they might naturally have led the disciples to surmise that, after all, their Master's predictions about suffering and death were *not* to be taken literally, but these *were* to be taken literally. It

was as if He said, "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord."

ii Although the event refuted such expectations, they were not so unreasonable as they may appear to many of us now, wise after the event, and unable to put ourselves in the position of the Twelve. Compared with the Jews of those days, we in modern times know little of the Old Testament. That is to say, though we may know far more about the purest text and the historical basis of fact, we know little of its spirit; we are not imbued with its freedom of poetic expression and hyperbole.

For example, when the Psalmist said, in a Psalm generally recognized as Messianic,[1] "My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death," the following words—which represent the Sufferer as still "compassed with dogs" and still calling for rescue—indicate that death had not yet come and that deliverance might forestall and prevent it: "O thou, my succour, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, my darling from the power of the dog." There, as elsewhere,[2] the Psalmist might speak in the character of one brought into the "dust," or province, of death, but not subjected to death: "The Lord hath chastened me sore: but He hath not given me over to death." The most obvious interpretation, then, of the Messianic passage, was, that the Sufferer was not actually to die. He was to *taste* of the

[1] Ps. xxii. 15. [2] Ps. cxviii. 18.

bitterness of death but not to "behold" it[1]: "Thou wilt not suffer thy holy one to see corruption."

iii Such a view might seem confirmed by the instances of Hezekiah and Jonah. The former had been brought to the brink of death, but he had not actually died when he sang his song of thanksgiving[2]: "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption . . . For the grave cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee." So, too, Jonah had not died when he cried to the Lord "out of the belly of Sheol." But above all, the sacrifice of Isaac afforded an instance of death in *intention* accepted as death in *fact*. Isaac had virtually died, and was virtually raised from the dead; and the Epistle to the Hebrews accordingly says that Abraham offered up his son[3] "accounting that God is able to raise up, *even from the dead; from whence also he did, in a figure, receive him back.*"[4]

[1] Compare a remarkable passage in John viii. 51–2 where Jesus speaks of "not *beholding* death," and the Jews misquote Him as though He had spoken of "not *tasting* death." The Evangelist is apparently directing the reader's attention to the difference between the two.

[2] Is. xxxix. 17–19.

[3] Hebr. xi. 19.

[4] We do not directly know that Jesus regarded Isaac as a type of the Messiah; nor does Genesis xxii. 9 so much as state that Isaac was a willing sacrifice. But it would appear that Jewish traditions (see the passages quoted in Schöttgen's Index, vol. ii) assumed Isaac's willingness, as also did Josephus. This being the case, we are justified in supposing that Jesus would take this view. And the view, apparently taken by Philo alone, that Abraham overcame (or anticipated by the quickness of his action) his son's resistance, so far from enhancing the merit of the father's sacrifice,

iv A semblance of reverence may prevent some from applying these considerations to the interpretation of our Lord's words when we ask, What did He Himself mean by them? But it will be a false reverence. To refuse to recognize Him as man, with man's mind and understanding, and as a Jew, with a Jew's environment, conceptions, and preconceptions, is not really reverent but (in those who have knowledge, and leisure to reflect on what they know) irreverent—the irreverence of a half-hearted Docetism, willing to concede that Christ's flesh was human, but asserting that His mind, understanding, and fore-knowledge, were purely divine.

Such an error is also most injurious to our spiritual appreciation of Christ's Passion. If He had seen, as in a map, every minute's incident in the sixty hours, or thereabouts, that elapsed between the institution of the Eucharist and the manifestation to Mary Magdalene, clearly marked out in an unalterable future, where would have been the unique merit of His

detracts from it. Resistance might tend to harden the sacrificer who has to suppress it; willingness would make the father feel all the more keenly how great a sacrifice he was making in offering up such a son. Gershon's Rabbinical commentary on Genesis xxii. 8, "They went both together," says, "Although Isaac knew now that he was to be offered as a sacrifice, yet they went both of them together, of one heart and mind, and equally happy (to slay and to be slain)."

The "binding" of Isaac would naturally be compared by Christians with the "binding" of Jesus; which is mentioned by Mark xv. 1 and Matthew xxvii. 1, but omitted by Luke. It is given a prominent place in John xviii. 12, where Melito calls attention to it as corresponding to "the binding of Isaac." Melito probably interpreted rightly the Evangelist's intention.

sacrifice ?[1] So far as faith is concerned, would it have been equal to that of Isaac ? Is the Saviour to be supposed to be destitute of faith ? Yet how could He have faith in anything if He saw everything ? "What a man seeth, how doth he yet hope for it," or entertain belief or faith about it ?

v True reverence, then, will lead us—while setting no limitations at all to Christ's love of God and man, and to His insight into spiritual Law—to maintain firmly against all Docetism, modern as well as ancient, that Jesus, on the eve of the Crucifixion, in all probability had no more knowledge of the exact material details that were to happen in the next few hours than any good man might be supposed to have. The spiritual and ultimate issue He clearly foresaw ; but

[1] It may be urged that our Lord's prediction of Peter's threefold denial is an instance of super-human fore-knowledge of detail. But, even if we could be sure that we had the exact words and their right interpretation, this might well be paralleled with other instances of "second sight," not recorded in the Bible, and generally regarded as remarkable but not supernatural.

Moreover, it is quite possible that, as on other occasions, Jesus, though accosting Peter in the singular, included all the disciples (compare "Simon, Simon, Satan hath begged you (pl.).") He may have predicted simply that Simon and the rest would abandon and virtually "deny" their Master, and this "repeatedly," and before "cock-crow." The word "thrice" (like "third day" above) may have been used for "two or three times," or "more than once." If that was the case, it was highly natural that the number should be afterwards insisted on as a literal prediction, especially if there were really three denials. Some confusion in the original tradition is perhaps indicated by St. Mark's Gospel, which alone speaks of the cock as crowing "twice." A very slight alteration would make the prediction run thus : "Before the cock crow, twice or thrice thou shalt deny me."

how far He prognosticated the visible stages by which it was to be reached, we can only conjecture from two sources, 1st, His own words, 2nd, the sayings of the Prophets which He would apply to Himself.

vi The latter might well leave room for doubt. Isaiah,[1] it is true, spoke of the Messiah as "a lamb that is led to the slaughter": but Jeremiah had used[2] similar words about himself, yet had escaped death at the time, and probably ultimately. Isaiah's context predicted that the Messiah would be "cut off from the land of the living," and spoke of a "grave made with the wicked": but there followed the words "When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; and he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors."

The words "offering for sin," and "poured out his soul unto death," remind us of Christ's words in the institution of the Eucharist, "This is my blood, poured forth for many," and suggest that the prophecy of Isaiah must have been prominently in His mind at this time, as indeed it could hardly fail to be. And, if so, the balance of probability is in favour of the belief that Jesus was expecting actual physical death, to be followed by victory and by the establishment of the

[1] Is. liii. 7–12. [2] Jer. xi. 19.

Kingdom. But we cannot say more than that He was "expecting" it. For, having before Him the above-mentioned instances, and especially the deliverance of Isaac "from the dead, in a figure," how could He feel certain that at any moment the Father would not intervene to save His Son, not in a figure but in fact, that He might not "see corruption"? That He would intervene at *some* time was certain. The question was, When?

§ 3

The same obscurity that we find in the words of the Eucharist attaches itself to most of the Lord's last sayings. Some of those which are inserted in the first two Gospels are omitted in the third, which again inserts others not found in the first two. And the Johannine Gospel differs here altogether from the Synoptists. But, besides these differences, there are indications that the same saying may have been interpreted by different Evangelists as referring to different occasions. Possibly, the excitement of that terrible time preceding the Crucifixion prevented the Apostles from recalling Christ's last words with the same accuracy with which they recalled their Master's earlier teaching, much of which was, perhaps, several times repeated.

i Be this as it may, the words, "Arise, let us go," are placed by the first two Gospels[1] at the moment when Judas is approaching with the soldiers to arrest

[1] Mark xiv. 42, Matth. xxvi. 46.

Jesus. The third Gospel omits them. The fourth[1] places them soon after Christ's statement that "the prince of the world cometh." The "prince of the world" means Satan, who is described as using Judas as his emissary. Accordingly, when Judas, with the power of Rome abetting the Jewish rulers, came to seize Jesus, this might well be described as a "coming" of "the prince of the world."

ii The same theory of dislocation seems to apply to the saying "it is enough," omitted by St. Matthew, and placed by the other Synoptists in wholly different contexts.[2] Again, St. Luke entirely omits the difficult saying (in the first two Gospels) which might be taken to represent God Himself as "smiting" Jesus,[3] "I will smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered"; while the fourth Gospel appears to allude to the "scattering" in such a way as to shew that the Son could not be "smitten" by the Father[4]: "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be *scattered*, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet *I am not alone, because the Father is with me.*"

[1] John xiv. 31 adds "hence." The words "Arise, let us go," are nowhere else used in the Gospels. It is very rare to find the Johannine Gospel agreeing with the Synoptists in any characteristic phrase. Where the words stand in the Synoptic Gospels, they give colour to the objection raised by Celsus, namely, that Jesus wished to run away. This, with other evidence, makes it probable that the phrase was omitted by the third Gospel because it suggested flight, and was inserted by the fourth Gospel in what seemed a more appropriate position.

[2] Mark xiv. 41, Luke xxii. 38.

[3] Mark xiv. 27, Matth. xxvi. 31.

[4] John xvi. 32.

iii The Johannine Gospel, in two of the instances just quoted, where the third Gospel omits some difficult passage in the first and second Gospels, appears to intervene in order to remove the difficulty.

This theory of Johannine intervention may apply to St. Luke's omission of the words[1] "I will go before you into Galilee." In the corresponding passage of the fourth Gospel occurs a promise of Jesus to go before the disciples to the Father's abode, to prepare a place for them.[2] The word Galilee means "circle" or "region"; and it is possible that these two sayings may have proceeded from the same original, interpreted by the first two Synoptists literally, omitted by the third Synoptist (who omits all manifestations in Galilee) because of the difficulty of taking it literally, and interpreted by the fourth Gospel spiritually.

§ 4

It appears from some of the above-quoted instances that passages in the two earliest Gospels are omitted by the third, and explained by the fourth, because of their difficulty.[3]

This increases the probability that the two earliest

[1] Mark xiv. 28, Matth. xxvi. 32. Later on, where the first two Gospels refer to the prediction, St. Luke has (xxiv. 6) "Remember how he spake unto you, *while still in Galilee*," giving to the word "Galilee" an entirely different context, resulting in an entirely different meaning.

[2] John xiv. 2.

[3] For a collection of similar passages, see an article by the author on "the fourth Gospel as correcting the third" in *The New World*, Sept. 1895.

Gospels give an account more historically exact than the third, and more verbally exact than the fourth. The words inserted by St. Matthew and St. Mark are not such as any Christian would have invented: they are such as many Christians would have wished to suppress, or alter.

§ 5

In the light of this evidence, approaching the narrative of the agony in Gethsemane, we find the two earliest Gospels recording that Jesus said [1] "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death," words entirely omitted by the third Gospel.

i The Greek word here used for "exceeding sorrowful" is found in only three passages of the Canonical Old Testament. Two of these,[2] where it is applied to Cain and Nebuchadnezzar, may be dismissed as wholly inapplicable to our present consideration. But the third is to the point. In it, the word is repeated as a kind of refrain to comfort the Psalmist in disquietude[3]: "Why art thou *cast down*, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me?" The passage begins with an expression of "thirst" for the presence of God, and ends with a refrain of praise. "Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God."

[1] Mark xiv. 34, Matth. xxvi. 38.

[2] Gen. iv. 6, Dan. ii. 12 (lxx.).

[3] It is thrice repeated in Ps. xlii. 5, 11, xliii. 5.

ii This beautiful passage seems well worthy to have been in our Saviour's thoughts during His hour of trial. And, if His soul was "cast down" or "exceeding sorrowful," it does not need Christian reverence to imagine—for it would be recognized by a heathen Shakespeare—that this "exceeding sorrow" did not arise from the anticipation of the mere outward humiliations and physical pains that were to precede death, but from far deeper feelings, at once more human and more divine. He who had sorrowed for each sinner, and most of all for Judas, as for His own "familiar friend," and by whom no sickness had been healed and no sin forgiven without an efflux of "virtue" from Himself, was now brought to a point where He had to face, as a human being, the prospect of death and temporary darkness, if not for Himself, at least for the disciples with whom He was one; of a work left incomplete, and to be completed He knew not when or how; leaving behind Him, as His successors, twelve followers, one of whom was already a traitor and the rest soon to be deserters. And this was His work! And these twelve, the traitor included, were His choice!

However assured He may have been that all things were possible for God, and that even now the Father would intervene with "twelve legions of angels" to save Him from arrest, *if* it was the divine will, yet this "if," not being as yet determined in the mind of the Son, could not but cast a veil over the immediate future. Hitherto, He had felt that the Father bade Him retain life, and He had avoided capture. Was He still to do so? Was He now, when the captors came, to say to His followers, "Arise, let us go hence," or was He to go

forward to meet His enemies? If the latter, what was to become of His affectionate but helpless disciples and of the hostile and still more helpless world for whose life He was throwing away His own?

iii Yet it was inevitable that the world, and especially the Western and philosophic world, would raise objections to His confession of "exceeding sorrow," as being unworthy even of a man of common courage, still more of a philosopher, not to speak of a would-be saviour of mankind. The charges of cowardice, brought against the character of Jesus by the sceptic Celsus, shew how our Lord's words were turned against His followers in the third century. But it is practically certain that similar charges must have been brought long before, and indeed as soon as the educated Greeks came into contact with the Gospel. Of the proofs that result in this certainty, one is afforded by the fact that St. Luke, writing for Greeks of culture, omits the confession.

iv In accordance with the relationship between the third and fourth Gospels indicated above,[1] the omission made by the former may prepare the reader for an intervention of the latter: and this probably exists, though, as usual, the Johannine language is quite different from the Synoptic.

First, let the difficulty be more fully stated. Referring again to the above-quoted Psalm of Comfort, the reader may note that the Psalmist uses two words to indicate his depression: 1st, "cast down," which agrees (in its

[1] See footnote on § 4, above.

Greek form) with the Synoptic word here; 2nd, "disquieted," or "troubled." The latter is the word in regular use among the Stoics to signify what a good and wise man ought *not* to be. He is *never* to be "troubled." "Freedom from trouble," they said, "is the one priceless gift from God, which a good man is bound to keep at all cost." Our Lord Himself forbids anxiety ("be not anxious for the morrow"), and bids us cast our cares on Him. Very similar is the language of the Stoics in forbidding "trouble," "disturbance"—the clouding or adulterating of that clear and pure element which should bring perpetual peace to the serene and tranquil heart that trusts in divine help. Were not the Stoics right? And, if so, ought the Psalmist to have said that he was "cast down" and "troubled"? And ought Jesus to have borrowed the former of these expressions in saying that He was "exceeding sorrowful"?

v The Christian reply is that the Stoics were not right. Perfect "freedom from trouble" is not one of God's gifts to men. As long as man is a social being, so long must the best sympathize with the worst, and bear a portion of their burdens. The result is "trouble," a sea of trouble: overlying, indeed, a sea of deep peace, but still, trouble on the surface, trouble in "the soul," penetrating sometimes down to the spirit itself. It was only by denying the reality of sin, and by making their ideal philosopher callous to it, that the Stoics could secure for him "perfect freedom from trouble." Epictetus distinctly teaches his pupils that each man must regard *the sins of others as "no evil" to himself.*

vi Taking up the Christian cause against the Stoics, the Johannine Gospel, as it were, throws down the gauntlet to their philosophy by applying this very term "trouble" to Jesus Himself—a course all the more audacious because, both in the Old and the New Testament, the word generally means the confused, turbulent, chaotic state of mind produced in foolish multitudes, or in guilty consciences, or, at best, in the minds of weak mortals bewildered by some divine message. This, however, does not deter the Evangelist from using the term, not once merely but thrice, and in a systematic climax, as follows.

Accepting the view that "trouble" for the miseries and sins of men comes to men from God's Wisdom, that is, from God's Word, or Logos, the Evangelist is led to the conclusion that, in the first instance in which the incarnate Logos feels "trouble," He ought to be represented as *bringing it upon Himself*. Accordingly, when describing Jesus as raising Lazarus, that is to say, as grappling with death, he says that Jesus[1] "*troubled himself*." In the second instance, when Jesus (as here in Gethsemane) is described as foreboding His own death, in contemplating the dying of the seed that it may "bring forth fruit," He says[2] "Now is *my soul troubled*, and what am I to say? 'Father, save me from this hour?' Nay, but for this cause came I, unto this hour." This is the second stage, and it will be observed that the Evangelist agrees with the first two

[1] John xi. 33. The Revised Version places this rendering in the margin: but it is the only one that can claim to be called strictly accurate.

[2] John xii. 27.

Synoptists in describing Jesus as speaking (here alone in the whole of the Gospel narrative) about His "soul." In the third stage, the "trouble" is caused by the prospect of the treachery of Judas. This is the worst of all and pierces downward to that which lies beneath the "soul":[1] "He was *troubled in the spirit*, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you that one of you shall betray me."

vii Our conclusion is that the fourth Gospel—besides adding to the probability, intrinsically very great, that Christ's confession of sorrow, as recorded in the first two Synoptists, contains, or approximates to, His exact words—is of great value as a critical commentary, teaching us why the confession was omitted in the third Gospel, and still more valuable as a spiritual commentary, teaching us how to accept it as enhancing, instead of detracting from, the character of the Son of God.

§ 6

Passing to the Lord's Prayer in Gethsemane, we find that the first two Synoptists mention an "if *possible*," which the third alters into "if *thou wilt*."

i Here, again, we are met by very early variations in quotations, presumably from our Evangelists, as well as by initial differences between the Evangelists themselves: but the earliest Gospel is as follows[2]: "He prayed that, if it were (lit. is) possible, the hour might

[1] John xiii. 21. [2] Mark xiv. 35–36.

pass from him. And he said, Abba, father, all things are possible to thee: remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, [the question is] not, What[1] do I will? but, What dost thou (will)?"

ii It is said, or implied, by the first two Evangelists, that He uttered these or similar words thrice. St. Luke omits this: and some might be disposed to ask whether the repetition does not seem contrary to our Lord's own command to avoid vain repetition in prayer.

But it is in remarkable harmony with the recorded experience of St. Paul, who, when buffeted by a messenger of Satan, a thorn in the flesh, "besought the Lord *thrice*" that it might pass from him, and received the answer, "My grace is sufficient unto thee." So here, Jesus is represented as employing threefold prayer, not as a means of changing the Father's will, but as a means of ascertaining it. Moreover, according to St. Mark, He probably does not say, "Not my will but thine be done," nor, "Not as I will but as thou wilt," but, "The question is not, What do I will? The question is, What is thy will?"

iii When the Father's will is ascertained, after the threefold prayer, Jesus refuses any longer to appeal for intervention. In one sense, He *could* still appeal, and the Father could not but assent, for the Father could deny nothing to the Son. But, in another sense, the Son *could not* repeat the prayer a fourth time, because

[1] The particle is interrogative, not relative, and there is no sufficient reason for taking it relatively.

to do so now would be to contravene the Father's eternal and fore-ordained will or law, set forth in the Scriptures and now made absolutely clear by the course of events and by the result of the threefold supplication: "Thinkest thou that I cannot beseech my Father and he will even now send me more than twelve legions of angels; how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled?" Theoretically, the "beseeching" was still "possible," and, if uttered, certain to be fulfilled. Practically, it was *wrong*, and therefore not "possible."

iv It may be objected that prayer, such as that above described, is tentative, that tentativeness is inconsistent with faith, and that St. Mark's Gospel indirectly forbids tentative prayer: "All things whatsoever ye pray and ask for, *believe that ye have received them*, and ye shall have them."

But the belief that we "have received" is quite compatible with a spirit that is tentative, or rather interrogative, as to the *shape* in which we shall find that we "have received" the fulfilment of our prayer. When a man asks that a burden may be lightened that is twice as great as he can easily bear, it is indifferent to him whether the burden is halved or his strength is doubled: either would fulfil his petition. St. Paul's prayer was fulfilled, not by removing the thorn, but by making his weakness strong in the "all-sufficing" grace of God: and the Apostle knew that in this way or in that his desire would be granted, so that, although he prayed interrogatively, it was in the interrogativeness of a perfect faith.

So it was (we may be sure) with Jesus. St. Luke

describes an angel as "appearing unto him from heaven" and "strengthening him," after the prayer. The passage is probably either an interpolation or an insertion in a later edition of the Gospel. But in any case it is the materialistic expression of an objective spiritual fact. The prayer of Jesus was fulfilled in an accession, not only of knowledge, but also of strength to bear that terrible burden which knowledge brought with it.

v It was, of course, not to be expected that the enemies of the Christian religion would enter into the meaning of such thoughts as these, even if they had taken the pains to consider them. The Jewish controversialist, personated by Celsus the sceptic, pours scorn on our Lord's prayer. The orthodox apologists who defend it are sometimes more subtle than successful. One of them meets the objection of prayer non-fulfilled by saying that Jesus did not pray that *the* cup, but that *this* cup, should pass from Him.

The fourth Gospel indirectly meets objections by its above-mentioned narrative of what happened to Jesus on the second occasion when He was "troubled." It represents Jesus, not as being tempted, but as (so to speak) *tempting Himself*, by putting before Himself the temptation to appeal to the Father, and by rejecting it: "Shall I say, 'Save me'? Nay, I came to be *not saved*." Here, as elsewhere, the first two Synoptists must be accepted as giving the words of the Lord, but the fourth Gospel as aiding us to understand their spiritual meaning.

§ 7

The utterances of Jesus before the tribunal of the High Priest need little comment. They appear to indicate a feeling that any defence would result in misunderstanding and that it was time for misunderstandings to cease. The relation of the Synoptic to the Johannine account of Pilate's judicial proceedings would require a special investigation, beyond the limits of this treatise, and throwing light rather on the fourth Gospel than on the character of Jesus.

i But it is not possible to pass over the last articulate words of Jesus upon earth as recorded by the two earliest Gospels.[1] "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" These words, which are a quotation from the opening of the twenty-second Psalm, were uttered, they say, in Aramaic. They add that some of the bystanders misunderstood the cry, "My God (Eli)" for an appeal to "Elias," and that some one ran and gave Jesus a sponge filled with vinegar: after this, Jesus "uttered a loud voice and gave up his spirit."

ii The third Gospel omits the quotation from the twenty-second Psalm, and describes the end thus[2]:

[1] Mark xv. 34, Matth. xxvii. 46.

[2] Luke xxiii. 46, as in R. V. margin. R. V. has, in text, "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, . . ." This leaves the reader free to suppose that "the loud voice" was an inarticulate cry, and was followed by the words "Father . . . spirit." But the textual reading is not so well in accordance with the Greek idiom as the marginal.

"And Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said this he gave up the ghost (i.e. spirit).[1]" The words here quoted are from the thirty-first Psalm.

iii Early Christian tradition, adopted by some of the orthodox as well as by heretics, interpreted the words in the first two Gospels as follows, "My power, my power, why hast thou forsaken me?" But the interpretation may well have proceeded from the same motive that may have led the author of the third Gospel to omit the words altogether. They seemed to be a "scandal" or "stumbling-block" to the Church. And indeed, even now, in the midst of all our assurance that, whatever the words may have meant, the event went well, and that Jesus came through the darkness safely and victoriously and will bring us in His train to the same victorious issue, it cannot but fill us with wonder, if not with sadness, to find that His last words, misunderstood by bystanders then, should be so liable to be misunderstood by critics now, and so conducive to perplexity and depression in the weaker moments even of believers at the present day.

iv The difficulty may be partially removed by bearing in mind that the words are a quotation, and, as

[1] The R. V. does not aim at expressing the minute differences of phrase between Mark xv. 37 "having *sent forth* a great cry, *breathed forth* [his spirit]", Matth. xxvii. 50 "having again called out with a great cry, *sent forth his spirit*," Luke xxiii. 46 "having said this, *breathed forth* [his spirit]." It will be observed that the Greek word for "send forth," used by St. Mark with the "cry," is used by St. Matthew with "spirit." The fourth Gospel uses a word that implies surrender, John xix. 20 "*delivered up* his spirit."

such, may be intended to express in one short utterance the spirit of the *whole* of the Messianic Psalm, which must have been constantly before the mind of Jesus. Beginning with an expression of the sense of abandonment, it ends with consolation and triumph: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . Save me from the lion's mouth: yea, from the horns of the wild oxen thou hast answered me . . . All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord . . . A seed shall serve him. It shall be told of the Lord unto the next generation. They shall come and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done it."

v Yet, even if the words of Jesus included this meaning, they must remain, and are perhaps intended to remain, the hardest of the hard sayings in the Gospel. They shadow forth an experience not even to be distantly approached by a believer without the profoundest awe and a horrible sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin. To think that the Deliverer should Himself crave deliverance, to think that His consciousness of the ever-present love of God should be, even for a few moments, dimmed—and this, too, by the very effectiveness of His love for men, and the intensity of His devotion to the Father's will, because He identified Himself so closely with sinners as to appear associated with, and as it were infected by, the sin that He came to destroy! That He should seem, even for one instant, to see God far off, and to suppose Himself not only humiliated, rejected, deserted and betrayed on earth, but even abandoned in heaven! How destruc-

tive a thought, this, to religious complacency, and to the notion that ours is the best of all possible worlds!

vi Contrast with this the last utterance of Socrates, half-humorous, half-sublime, and wholly intelligible, in which the dying philosopher, after his face had been covered for the end, sent forth a final whisper of quiet assumption that the end was but the end of a long disease and the beginning of a better life, so that the survivors must make an offering for him to the God of Health: "Crito, we owe a cock to Æsculapius. Pay it, and forget it not."

How sad a mystery, what a depressing failure, by comparison, seems to be suggested by the Synoptic tradition of the last words of Jesus! Yet perhaps, if we could fathom the laws of the spiritual world and the fixed necessity of the law that a man who is to "gain" his soul must first "lose" it, we might find that, *because* the life of Jesus was so signal a failure in appearance, therefore it was so stupendous a triumph in the world of that which is eternal and real. Because Jesus made His soul "an offering for sin," and "poured out his soul unto death," and was so "troubled," or so took "trouble" on Himself, that He may be described as having been "bruised" and "put to grief" by the Father Himself, for this reason He has seen His seed, He has prolonged His days, and the pleasure of the Lord has prospered in His hand. Because He experienced what it was for man to feel "forsaken of God," therefore His spirit received power to make all believers know a Father who can never "forsake."

vii The fourth Gospel appears at first sight to agree with the third in wholly omitting the utterance we are considering. It agrees, indeed, with the first two Gospels in inserting the offering of the sponge with vinegar: but, whereas they insert (before, and as the cause of, that incident) the cry to "Eli" taken from the Psalms, the Johannine Gospel inserts (before, and as the cause of, the same incident) a cry that may be a quotation from another Psalm but seems at first quite different in meaning—simply "I thirst."

A moment's reflection, however, will convince even the most hasty reader that "thirst" must mean, primarily, spiritual "thirst." Nowhere in Christ's doctrine does the fourth Evangelist use "thirst" or kindred words (such as "bread," "water," "life," "flesh," "blood") in any but a spiritual sense; least of all could he suppose a purely physical meaning in the last utterance of the Saviour. We are therefore justified in believing, nay, compelled to believe, that the word denotes such a craving for God's presence as is expressed by the Psalmist when he says, "My soul is athirst for the presence of the living God."

But such "thirst," in any human soul, implies a temporary absence of divine communion from that soul: and hence—though under cover of a different metaphor and an allusion to a different Psalm—the author expresses the same spiritual thought as that implied in the Synoptic narrative.

The Johannine meaning is still further illustrated by the description of Christ's "bowing his head," as it is unfortunately translated. The real meaning of this rare phrase (which does not occur in the Bible except in

one passage common to St. Matthew and St Luke[1]) seems to be "laid his head down" i.e. laid it to rest. Taken with the following words ("he gave up his spirit")—which denote, not the "commending" of a deposit, but the absolute surrender of the Son—the "laying of the head" appears to mean that now, at last, the Son, after accomplishing the Father's will, gives up His Spirit to Him, and at once finds the home where alone He can rest, "laying" His head on the Father's bosom.

Whatever may be the critical conclusions as to the exact nature of Christ's last utterance on the Cross, there can be no reasonable doubt that, while the first two Gospels are closest to the words, the fourth is a veritably inspired commentary on them, enabling us to understand their spirit.

[1] Matth. viii. 20, Luke ix. 58, "The son of man hath not where to *lay his head*," i.e. to rest and sleep.

BOOK IV

THE DOCTRINE OF ST. PAUL

OR

THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

CHAPTER I

THE PERSONALITY OF CHRIST

1 The divine Sonship

§ 1

In our ignorance of the date and origin of the traditions or documents from which the Gospels were compiled, the Epistles of St. Paul assume great importance as supplying their deficiencies, first, because we know the dates, roughly, of the most important of the Epistles, and, secondly, because the most important of them bear so clear a stamp of the Pauline personality that they are acknowledged, even by sceptics, to be genuine.

i It may be objected, "Many passages in them are written for temporary, and, so to speak, casual objects, e.g. to settle whether men may eat meat offered to idols, or women may pray with their heads uncovered. How can casual apostolic dicta on points of this kind afford valuable evidence as to the truth or untruth of the statements in the Gospels?"

But, in fact, this very "casuality" makes the evidence

of the Epistles more valuable. They were not written for the purpose of giving us an insight into the Church of those days, nor for the purpose of proving the reality of Christ's miracles, nor for the purpose of stating the facts of Christ's life from a Pauline point of view. Consequently, their evidence as to these three points is all the more valuable because it is indirect, undesigned, and free from the suspicion of bias.

ii For example, as to "mighty works" (or "signs") and the gift of "tongues," St. Paul assumes that the Corinthians had seen him work the former and had heard him use the latter. How much stronger evidence is this than an elaborate attempt on his part to prove that he had done these things!

Again, as to the facts of Christ's resurrection, he appeals[1] to the gospel which he had "preached" unto them and which they had "received." So, as to the Lord's Supper,[2] "I received of the Lord that which also *I delivered unto you.*"

Under the circumstances, this assumption of things as well-known is a strong proof that they were well-known.

§ 2

A summary of the doctrine of St. Paul concerning the "Son of God" is contained in the opening words of the Epistle to the Romans:[3] "The gospel of God, which he promised of old through his prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning his Son, who was born of the

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 2–3. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 23. [3] Rom. i. 2–4.

seed of David according to the flesh, who was defined as being the Son of God, in power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead."

This contains :—

1st, an appeal to the Old Testament as being a continuous preparation for the New.

2nd, an implied [1] statement that the Son was the Son before the Incarnation. So far as the incarnation is concerned, He is merely said to have been "of the seed of David according to the flesh." Nor did the resurrection *constitute* Him the Son; it only "defined" Him—i.e. marked Him out, or manifested Him—to be what He was from the first, namely the Son of God.

3rd, an implied statement that in His incarnation the Son became the Deliverer, or "Anointed," or "Christ," or "Messiah," promised through the Prophets. This is implied in the words "born of the seed of David," which, besides having a direct and literal, have also an indirect and allusive significance—David being the type of a royal and effective deliverer.

4th, a statement that the resurrection "defined" Him to be the Son of God in accordance with the Spirit of holiness. This suggests that the Son of God, in virtue of the Spirit of holiness, which He possessed in its fulness, could not but rise from the dead. It was part of the "definition" of the Son of God that,

[1] It is certainly not stated here; but it appears to be implied (as also in Rom. viii. 3, where the "sonship" seems to precede the "sending"). This is definitely expressed in 1 Cor. x. 4, "the rock that followed them" (i.e. Israel in the wilderness), "was Christ"; 1 Cor. viii. 6, "one Lord Jesus Christ through whom are all things," and in the still more unmistakable expressions in the later Pauline teaching, such as Col. i. 15 "first-born of all creation."

although He was born and died in the flesh, yet He must rise again in the Spirit. This amounts to saying, in modern phrase, that His rising from the dead was not a breach of spiritual law, but in accordance with the necessary activity of spiritual agencies.

A similar antithesis, in connection with the resurrection, is expressed in 1 Pet. iii. 18, "being put to death *in the flesh*, but quickened *in the Spirit*."

§ 3

This triumph of the Spirit over death is said to be achieved "in power"—a common Pauline expression to denote the spiritual element in which, so to speak, Christ's Gospel breathed forth its influence, vitalizing the spirits of men.

It was thus that the Apostle distinguished the word of God from mere sophistical discussions or philosophic speculations, enunciated in an atmosphere of mere criticism or otiose "wisdom." To him the Gospel seemed to have its being in a "wind," or "spirit," of energy that resulted in action, changing the heart, making all things new, and producing life out of death.

§ 4

Taking this broad and wide-reaching view of a Son whom—as appears from a collective view of the Epistles—he seems to have regarded as existing from the beginning of things, a fore-ordained Deliverer of a fore-ordained Universe, St. Paul implies that, although Jesus of Nazareth was this eternal Son of God, yet He was

not "defined" as such till the resurrection, and this "defining" took place in accordance with the working of "the Spirit of holiness."

i Christ, then, could not be known as being what He was, apart from the fatherhood of God and the quickening influence of the Spirit. Hence, according to the Pauline view, He could not be really known before His resurrection. Until that event, He was "known according to the flesh"; and, as long as He was "known according to the flesh," He could not be fully or spiritually known:[1] "wherefore henceforth we know no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know him so no more."

ii What does the Apostle mean by saying, "We know no man according to the flesh"?

He explains himself in his following, as well as in his preceding, words. In Christ's death all men died, in Christ's resurrection all men rose to a new life: "Wherefore, if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things are passed away; behold they are become new." Hence, by "knowing no man according to the flesh," he means, "We know no man

[1] 2 Cor. v. 16. There are passages where an express distinction is made between "according to the flesh" and "in the flesh"; and in such passages the former expression means "under the control of the flesh," that is, in a blind, worldly, unspiritual, self-seeking spirit. But unless such a distinction is expressly made by the writer, as in 2 Cor. x. 3, it is not to be made by the reader: and such a meaning does not appear to be justified in 2 Cor. v. 16, any more than in Rom. i. 2, quoted above.

except in that Spirit of revivification which is contrary to 'the flesh.'" In other words, we are to know no man except as being a part of the great spiritual Body intended by God to partake in the common spiritual life.

iii At bottom, therefore, the Epistles agree with that passage of the fourth Gospel which says that[1] "the Spirit was not yet [given], *because* Jesus was not yet glorified." Similarly, St. Paul implies that the Twelve, and the other disciples of Jesus who had known Christ "according to the flesh," had no advantage over him, the fourteenth Apostle, who had not thus known Christ.

iv This also may explain why the Epistles very seldom mention the name of Jesus, apart from Christ, or Lord. When they do so, it is in order to refer to His humiliations, suffering, death and resurrection, throughout which He is regarded as the man Jesus, not "defined" to be the Son of God, nor to be the Christ or Messiah, till He had risen and ascended to the Father. Such a passage as that in the Epistle to the Philippians,[2] "that at the name of *Jesus* every knee should bow," is somewhat exceptional, describing, as a kind of paradox, the exaltation of the human to the divine: and moreover it is to be interpreted in the light of what follows, "and that every tongue should confess that *Jesus Christ is Lord.*" The "confession" and the "bowing" are supposed to be simultaneous, and men are regarded as not being

[1] John vii. 39. [2] Phil. ii. 10.

justified in paying homage to "Jesus" until they acknowledge Him as "Christ" and "Lord."

In other words, the Pauline doctrine is that Jesus could not be recognized and worshipped as what He was, until He had been "defined" for men by His resurrection, and had been associated in their hearts with the Father, in the power of the Spirit.

2 *The Father, the Son, and the Spirit*

§ 1

The main Pauline proofs, then, of Christ's divine Sonship, are, 1st, His resurrection, 2nd, His life-giving "power," experienced by His ministers, and, through them, by every one that received the Gospel.

i Comparatively speaking, little stress is laid by the Apostle on Christ's fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies. Still less stress is laid on His "mighty works," which are regarded merely as "signs" of redeeming "power." It is assumed that "mighty works" are performed by many members of Christian congregations, and, generally, for directly moral results. The gift of tongues, in particular, is counted by St. Paul as one of the least valuable because its moral results are often not apparent.

ii No argument for the divine Sonship is based by him upon a miraculous conception, which is neither

affirmed nor implied in any part of the Pauline Epistles.

We have seen above that St. Paul accepted the tradition that Jesus was "of *the seed of David* according to the flesh." Consequently, it is quite possible that he may have accepted one of the two genealogies now found in St. Matthew's and St. Luke's Gospels. But both of these trace the descent of Jesus from David through Joseph, not through Mary; and no satisfactory attempt has been made to give them any other significance. If therefore the Apostle had in view either of these documents, he would seem to be relying on the descent of Joseph alone.

St. Paul nowhere quotes the prophecy of Isaiah[1] concerning the Virgin that was to conceive and bear a son whose name was to be Immanuel. Nor does he use language like that of Ignatius, who describes the Saviour as[2] "of the seed of David but of the Holy Spirit," and "both of Mary and of God."

§ 2

The word "Trinity" is nowhere mentioned by St. Paul; nor does he ever (probably) describe Christ as God.

i But his undisputed Epistles shew that he spoke, not only of "the Spirit of God," but also, occasionally[3] (and apparently synonymously) of "the Spirit of his Son," and of "the Spirit of Christ," This points towards a conception of the One God revealed in three

[1] Is. vii. 14. [2] Eph. 18 and 7. [3] Rom. viii. 9–11, Gal. iv. 6.

characters or persons, viz. Father, Son, and Spirit, which appears also to be implied in the blessing that concludes the second Epistle to the Corinthians, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all."

ii When we speak of "characters" or "persons," we mean something more than different aspects of one Being. St. Paul evidently regards the Father and the Son as distinct personalities, and he leads us to regard the Spirit as similarly distinct by mentioning it, as above, along with the Father and the Son, and by speaking of it as mediating in the human heart between God and man.

It never occurs to him that these truths require defence or demonstration. They are, to him, and to those whom he is addressing, truths of spiritual experience, and he is not careful about the consistency of the metaphors in which he expresses them.

For example, Christ is the person "*through* whom" we approach God. Still more frequently, it is "*in* Christ" that we "please God," or "live to God," or "are known by God." Yet, by another metaphor, the Spirit of Christ is spoken of as *in* us; or, if we may appeal to the Epistle to the Ephesians (which certainly contains Pauline teaching, whether written by St. Paul or not), Christ Himself is to *dwell in our hearts by faith.*

§ 3

St. Paul habitually speaks of the Spirit as neuter. The neuter gender of the Greek word may be alleged as

the reason in some instances. But it does not explain why, in referring to the Spirit, the Apostle does not use the pronoun "He" (as he might easily have done, and as our Revisers have done) or "She" (as some early heretics did) so as to make the personality, in the popular sense, clear.

Even where it is mentioned as "bearing witness with us" and "making intercession for us," there is an advantage in calling the Spirit "it" and not "him" or "her." For, thus, we imperceptibly receive the lesson that what we call impersonal in the ubiquitous Law of things may be really personal—if "bearing witness" and "making intercession" are personal acts.

Hence, the old version,[1] "The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God" seems preferable to the well-intentioned "The Spirit *himself*" of the Revised Version. If there is to be any change at all (which is to be deprecated), is it absolutely certain that "himself," and not "herself," is the right change? Might not the Spirit represent the maternal aspect of the attributes of the Supreme Being?[2]

§ 4

St. Paul assumes in the opening of his first Epistle to the Corinthians that all the saints everywhere "call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ," that is,

[1] Rom. viii. 16.

[2] Shakespeare and Milton sometimes speak of the soul as "her." It is largely a question of the gender of the word, Greek or Latin, used by the classical writers from whom English writers derived their thoughts. When the Spirit is spoken of as an Advocate (masc.), then it is natural that it should be called "he."

apparently, offer prayer to Christ. Also, it is to "the Lord" that the Apostle himself addresses prayer,[1] and it is from Him that he receives the answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is conceivable that prayer addressed to the Son might have been answered by the Father. But it is not so here. "The Lord" means the Lord Jesus Christ, and He is here seen receiving, answering, and fulfilling prayer.

i The importance of the Pauline evidence is immeasurably greater than it would have been, had the Apostle expressly exhorted the Corinthians to offer prayer to Christ, or justified his own conduct in offering it. When the Acts of the Apostles represents the first martyr, Stephen, as saying "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," doubts may arise as to the date of the book, the nature of the documents that composed it, and the competence of the compiler to distinguish the early from the late, and the trustworthy from the false. But no such doubts arise here. And hence we infer that, long before the days of Pliny, the statement of Pliny was verified in the first generation of the Church, namely, that the Christians met together, and "sang hymns to Christ as to a god."

ii Moreover, it appears that St. Paul's habit of offering prayer to Jesus, as the Christ and as the Son of God, is not based on his acceptance of the historical fact of a miraculous conception, but on his personal experience of Christ's resurrection attested, in the first

[1] 2 Cor. xii. 8.

place, by a voice and a vision; afterwards, by the consciousness of a new "power" in his heart, which he attributed to Christ or to Christ's Spirit; then, by the effects of this "power" not only on himself but on others, resulting in many "mighty works," among which the mightiest was a complete change of the whole human being, best described as a regeneration or new birth; lastly, by a fresh study of the history of mankind and of God's redemption of man, as set forth in the Scriptures and illustrated by human nature.

iii And in a Jew, a "Hebrew of Hebrews," a pupil of Gamaliel, brought up in the traditions of the Pharisees, and "exceedingly zealous for them," how much is implied in this offering of prayer! It is inconceivable that he would have prayed to a mere prophet, angel, or archangel, or to any semi-divine deputy of the Supreme. But it is both conceivable and natural that, while retaining his Jewish monotheism, he may have been drawn by the Spirit of such a one as Jesus into a recognition of the fact that the One God had been from the beginning a Father in heaven, and that the eternal Fatherhood, having been manifested by the incarnation of the eternal Sonship in Jesus upon earth, was now to be worshipped by men, in the Spirit of Fatherhood and Sonship, through Jesus, the Lord, the Christ, and the eternal Son, in heaven.

§ 5

It is not within the limits of this treatise to review the grounds on which the Johannine Gospel bases the

acknowledgment of Jesus as the Christ and as the Son of God. But it is natural to modern minds—disposed as they are to deify force, and very ignorant of what is really god-like—to suppose that no one could accept Jesus as divine without accepting the miraculous conception, so that St. Paul's faith, if it really was based on the foundation above described, would seem to them quite exceptional and even eccentric.

i In order to meet this prejudice before going further, it may be well to point out that, in the fourth Gospel, Nathanael, the only disciple that receives commendation from Jesus, calls Him "the Son of God" and "King of Israel" at a time when he is under the impression, conveyed to him by Philip, that Jesus was born at Nazareth and was "the son of Joseph";[1] while "the Jews" disbelieve and "murmur" on this very account:[2] "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How doth he now say, I am come down from heaven?"

ii Whatever may have been the opinion of the Evangelist, it is indisputable that these passages represent the disciples of Jesus as *believing* in spite of an ignorance of any miraculous conception, and the "Jews" as *disbelieving*, in part, because no miraculous conception is revealed to them. And it is hardly disputable

[1] John i. 49.

[2] To this Jesus replies, not only without making any reference to a supernatural conception, but also in such terms as to indicate that "coming" to Him depends, not on demonstration, but on spiritual sympathy (John vi. 43–44): "Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come unto me, except the Father which sent me draw him."

that the Evangelist approves of the disciples and disapproves of the "Jews."

The disciples overrode the technical and legal obstacles to Christ's Messiahship by sheer faith in Him as a man. They "came and *saw*" Him. Then they believed. That was the right belief—belief in human nature, "seen" at its best.

The Pharisees put forth technical difficulties as reasons why they should not believe: "We know this man's father; he was Joseph the carpenter. When the Messiah comes, we shall not know whence he comes. Therefore this man is not the Messiah. And again, the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, but this man was born in Nazareth (and he does not deny it): therefore, once more, he cannot be the Messiah." If Philip had said, in answer to these objections, as he said to Nathanael, "Come and see," they would have poured scorn on him as a wretched and irreverent Galilean, who did not know the Law: "What has 'coming and seeing' to do with it?" they would have said; "How can 'seeing' a man's face alter the statutes of Israel?" This was the wrong belief—belief in "written law," where the "writing," or man's interpretation of it, went against the facts of human nature.

iii The Evangelist's own opinion concerning the relative merits of St. Matthew's account (which would lead us to believe that Bethlehem was the natural home of the parents of Jesus) and St. Luke's account (which would point to Nazareth) it is not possible to determine with certainty. The subtlety with which he sometimes distinguishes between one who "comes from (*ἀπό*)," and

one who has "sprung from (ἐκ)," a village, combines with other considerations to make it probable that he knew of this controversy and kept clear of it, but in such a way as to shew that he regarded it as one of slight importance to believers: enough for a believer to know that Jesus had come down from heaven, the House of Bread above, the celestial Bethlehem.

iv To Pharisees, of course, the Bethlehem question was of vital importance. Christ's birth in Nazareth might be a stumbling-block that would prevent a believer in prophecy from crossing the threshold of the Church. And this certainly makes it difficult for a reader of the fourth Gospel to avoid inclining to the belief that the author regarded Jesus as born in Nazareth. Else, why does that Gospel describe Him as keeping silence when the Nazareth-birth is urged against Him? why do His mother, friends, disciples, conspire to suppress (if they knew) so remarkable a fulfilment of prophecy as the birth in Bethlehem? With grim humour, a modern orthodox commentator on the fourth Gospel has realized the extraordinary scene—representing Jesus, the native of Bethlehem, standing amid "the multitude," some of whom assail the rest (who are disposed to believe) with the objection,[1] "What, doth the Christ come out of Galilee?" and nevertheless holding His peace,—and has called it "truly tragic." Tragic indeed—the tragedy, perhaps, of many souls of His

[1] John vii. 42. They continue, "Hath not the Scripture said that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was?"

countrymen! But who, except Jesus, could be held responsible for the tragedy? What has He done that we should thus accuse Him of practically denying the truth, by conniving at falsehood in such a way that the help that should have been derived from the fulfilment of prophecy might be converted into an actual hindrance of faith?

CHAPTER II

"POWER"

1 *The practice of St. Paul and the Pauline Churches*

§ 1

The doctrine of Christ has been shewn to be, in appearance, eminently unfit to survive and succeed in the struggle of cosmic forces. We have now to ask what made it succeed, so far as the causes of its success are exhibited to us in the Pauline Epistles.

i It has been superficially alleged—and the allegation has imposed on many who ought to have perceived its superficiality—that the Christian religion owed its success to its doctrine of future rewards and punishments, to the affection of the Christians for one another, to their constancy under persecution, and to a number of other "causes," among which Christ Himself is not mentioned.

But these "causes" could not have become causes till they had first been effects—the effects of previous causes. Our business is to ask *what caused* these secondary

"causes." What caused the doctrine of a future life to be so much more impressive for Christians than for Jews and other believers in it? What caused Christians to bear persecutions so constantly and to love one another so fervently?

ii The Epistles shew us that the real cause of the success of the Gospel was what St. Paul calls "power." The Gospel was preached, he says, not "in word" merely, but "in the Holy Spirit" and "in *power*," that is to say, a vitalizing conviction, energy, or spirit, which passed from the apostles or missionaries to their converts, and thence into the whole body of believers. It was this that distinguished them from sophists, philosophers, and Stoical lecturers on morality.

iii St. Paul's doctrine of a future life, for example, was quite different from the corresponding doctrine taught by Stoics. And why? Mainly because the former was preached with the conviction of one who felt the risen Saviour within him. So it was also with St. Paul's converts, though they had not had their teacher's experience of seeing Christ's spiritual body and hearing His spiritual voice. The promise of the Saviour's presence "wherever two or three were gathered together," became more than a promise in a Christian congregation, say, fifty years after Christ's birth, when ecstatic praises and prophesyings burst forth from men, usually silent or commonplace—uttered sometimes in language unknown and mysterious, which so impressed people of different nationalities as to make each say, "I hear my native tongue." Life to come seemed

surer when visible pledges of present life-giving order forced themselves on the congregation, as, for example, when the paralysed, the lame, and the halt, were bidden to arise in the name of the Lord Jesus, and did arise. Moreover, when missionaries, braving scorn, persecution, and sometimes death, in order to preach the Gospel, avowed that they preached simply because "the *love* of Christ constrained them," and because the Father had so *loved* the world that He had given His Son to die for the world, the word "love" gained a new meaning and a new constraining "power."

§ 2

Apart from the presence of this inward "power," the mere modern repetition of the ancient acts and words of St. Paul, or of the Pauline Church, would avail us, in these days, nothing. Nevertheless, it is important to consider at once how far the practice of the Apostle and his converts served to keep this "power" alive, because the result may help us hereafter, when we have to consider by what corresponding practice we in our times may produce a corresponding result.

What, then, did the Christians in the Pauline Churches do, that distinguished them from the Pagans around them?

i (1) They met regularly (probably on the first day of the week by preference) for public worship; (2) they instructed and baptized converts and laid their hands on the baptized, praying that they might receive the

Holy Spirit; (3) they partook of a meal together, and at the same time they celebrated "the Lord's Supper"; (4) they made almsgiving and hospitality congregational works, and sometimes extended their alms to the members of other congregations; (5) they exercised disciplinary powers over members of the congregation, reprimanding offenders, casting out the impenitent, and reinstating the penitent; (6) through special members of the congregation, who were endowed with special "gifts," they practised faith-healing of an instantaneous kind, as well as healing generally, and their public worship was often accompanied with an exercise of the gift of "tongues" described above; (7) they were also, for the most part, notable for sobriety, purity, truthfulness, honesty, justice, gentleness, and kindly good-will.

In some of these respects, public hospitality, for example, and alms-giving, and also in some features of public worship, the Christian practice resembled that of the Jewish synagogue.

ii St. Paul does not inculcate regular attendance at public worship. He assumes it. In his first Epistle to the Corinthians, though he protests that some of them come together "not for the better but for the worse," he never dreams of saying that the practice, because abused, should be discontinued. All his writings are pervaded with the thought that a disciple of Christ must be always a "member" of "a body," one of "many," partaker in a "fellowship," a brother among "brethren."

§ 3

As regards baptism, St. Paul knew from experience that it was sometimes accompanied by the ecstatic "gift" of "tongues," and generally by a change of heart resulting in a new life and deserving to be called the work of the Spirit.

But those who had been thus baptized could fall away, and, in some cases, had actually fallen away; and all needed to be daily renewed in their inmost being, in what he calls the "mind of their heart."

He regards the rite as a "putting on of Christ," or "being buried with Christ." In his earlier doctrine, he speaks of Israel as being baptized "in *the cloud*" as well as "in the sea" (that is, apparently, "in the Spirit as well as in water") the "cloud" being the emblem of the special presence of God's Spirit; and his later doctrine[1] appears to contain a protest against a growing superstitious trust in "water" alone. But he does not argue about the benefits of baptism, or the conditions for receiving its benefits, or the age at which baptism should be received. Nor does he say anything of the necessity, or even desirableness, of baptizing the children of Christian parents. But he declares that the children of a "mixed marriage," (i.e. where only one parent was Christian) are already "holy"—and this, apparently, without being baptized.

§ 4

St. Paul does not inculcate the observance of the Sabbath, nor of any feasts or fasts, nor of the Levitical

[1] Eph. v. 26, Tit. iii. 5.

ordinances as to food. In converted Gentiles he regards such observances as positively bad, implying such a trust in Law as encroached upon, and tended to destroy, trust in Christ. He himself counted it no sin to partake of meat that had been offered to idols. External things of this kind seemed to him of no importance to a healthy Christian conscience. But, if he found himself in company with those who were "under the Law," or with "weak brethren," he was ready, for their sakes, to abstain from anything rather than cause a weak brother to stumble.

This public and spontaneous Christian adaptiveness is altogether different from the "hypocrisy" or "dissimulation" which St. Paul connected with a charge brought against St. Peter.[1] St. Paul never professed to believe that acts of this kind were important, and never made them an occasion for "separating himself" from Gentile or Jewish Christians, as St. Peter was said to have done.

St. Paul describes himself[2] as "in fastings often." But these "fastings" appear to have been involuntary, like the "labours" and "watchings" which he mentions in the same context. He "laboured" to earn his bread. After preaching by day, he often remained awake, "watching," and "labouring" through the night. When his earnings were insufficient, he was sometimes forced to "fast." There is no evidence in the Epistles—and the Acts, however regarded, cannot claim to compete with the Epistles where the two seem to differ—that he practised the Jewish fasts as a rule, or enjoined the practice on others, still

[1] Gal. ii. 11–14. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 27.

less that he recognized or practised any regular Christian fasts.

§ 5

St. Paul conceives "the communion of the body and blood of Christ" as an act whereby, taking Christ into ourselves, we are ourselves taken into Christ, and thus into a communion or fellowship, not only with God, but also with God's children. For God's children are "in Christ."

i This he expresses in various metaphors. Christ's body is the "bread" or "loaf." Yet we ourselves are[1] "the body of Christ and severally members thereof." "The loaf which we break" is[2] "a communion of the body of Christ"; yet we ourselves also are "one loaf, one body; for we all partake of the one loaf." The fundamental meaning is that Christ represents redeemed humanity, that is to say, human nature when one with God. Under this aspect, "humanity" may be described as "the body of Christ" of which, individually, we are the "limbs." Then, while ourselves being parts of the body, we derive our nourishment from the body. Here the metaphor of "the one body" predominates over that of "the one loaf."

ii If the metaphor of "the one loaf" prevails, humanity may be described as "the one loaf" in which we individually are the component parts. But here the

[1] 1 Cor. xii. 27. [2] 1 Cor. x. 17.

thought of "nourishment" is dropped. We are parts of "the loaf," but the "parts" of the loaf cannot be said to derive nourishment from the whole.

For this reason, perhaps, St. Paul much more often uses the metaphor of "the body," which is repeated in all phases of his doctrine; but from first to last, he regards a true participation of the body and blood, or bread and cup, of Christ, as being impossible without that "communion of the Spirit" which unites man to man in Christ. Who is it that, according to the Apostle, eats and drinks "judgment" to himself, instead of salvation, in the Lord's Supper? It is the selfish and gluttonous partaker. The charge brought against him appears to be, not one of heterodoxy, but of immorality or non-morality—of neglecting the first principle of Christian communion. Failing to recognize the claims of human brotherhood, such a partaker, however orthodox, fails to discern "the one body" of Christ.

It appears, then, that our relations with one another "in Christ" are to make us one with God "in Christ"; and again, this harmony with God the Father "in Christ" is to increase our harmony with God's children "in Christ."

2 St. Paul gives no detailed rules of life

§ 1

These doctrines lead St. Paul to two general rules of life: first, we are not "under Law"; secondly we are

"in Christ." Everything Pauline is to be "in Christ." It is in Him that "all things become new." And, unless all things have become new, we are not born again, we are still unregenerate, still in our sins.

i "The Spirit of Christ" is to be our "new law." This is a Spirit of "fellowship" or "love." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law." We are not to make our "liberty" an "occasion of the flesh." On the contrary, "by love" we are to "serve one another." "All things are lawful, but all things are not expedient," that is to say, "The Law of Moses cannot bar us from anything; but the Law of Christ—that is, the Law of love, or the Law of the Spirit, or the Law that springs from the sense of the common good—bars us from many things by declaring them inexpedient for the community."

ii It is seldom that St. Paul departs from these bases of action in laying down rules for conduct.

When he does so depart, he sometimes resorts to argument that strikes us as unsatisfactory, as, for example, when he insists that women must pray with their heads veiled "because of the angels," or because "the woman is the glory of the man." Yet even this argument he concludes by falling back upon good sense, and order, and recognized custom[1]: "But if any man seemeth to be contentious, we have *no such custom*, neither the Churches of God."

iii It was probably his expectation of the speedy "coming" of Christ, preceded by terrible tribulations,

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 16.

that induced him to exhort slaves,[1] though they might have a chance of freedom, to prefer servitude. For the same reason, perhaps, he advises the marriageable to abstain from marriage. But for the most part he distinguishes (as in the matter of marriage[2]) between his own personal feeling or judgment and what is absolutely right or wrong.

§ 2

The Pauline doctrine of "forgiveness" will be discussed hereafter. Here we shall consider merely the practice of the Pauline Church.

i As regards private sins, such as envy and avarice, where no overt wrong was inflicted on any one, no external act seems to have been enjoined. The Apostle assumes private repentance and prayer, as helps towards "the daily renewal" of the Spirit within us.

ii As to overt wrongs against a neighbour, he assumes that they will be judged by those who have authority in the Church; and he blames the Corinthian Christians[3] for referring their disputes to a non-Christian tribunal.

iii But he bids the Corinthian Christians not to associate with such professing Christians as openly and systematically broke the rules of morality. Dealing, in particular, with a case where a man was living with his "father's wife"—an offence all the more serious

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 21. [2] 1 Cor. vii. 7. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 1.

because (though it was such conduct as was "not even named among the Gentiles") it had been condoned by a minority in the Church, perhaps as a proof of spirituality and of superiority to outward things—he directs[1] that judgment should be passed against the offender by the whole Church, and speaks of "delivering him over to Satan" that he may repent.

As to the same,[2] or another, offender, afterwards, when the man had (presumably) repented, and was in danger of being "swallowed up" with despair, the Apostle begs the Church to pronounce forgiveness, declaring that whomsoever and whatsoever they forgive, he also forgives.

§ 3

A word or two on this early form of excommunication may help us to realize the difference between the Pauline Church and ours.

i By "delivering over to Satan," St. Paul probably meant "consigning to God's chastening wrath, that the body might be pained for the good of the soul." He himself had been troubled by "Satan"[3] with a "thorn in the flesh"—apparently, some physical infirmity, we

[1] 1 Cor. v. 3–5.

[2] 2 Cor. ii. 7. The ordinary view is that it is the same man. But Mr. Llewelyn Davies in Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* ("St. Paul") adopts, and maintains with great force, a view taken by a few modern commentators of eminence, that the offence mentioned in the second Epistle was an attempt to overthrow St. Paul's apostolic authority.

[3] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

know not what—which so harassed him that he prayed to be delivered from it. But he received the answer that he was to endure it with the help of the Lord's grace. He infers that the "messenger," or "angel," of Satan had been sent to him for his good that he might not be "lifted up overmuch." This seems to imply a consciousness of fault, or of something verging on fault. He had been so nearly guilty of pride in his apostolic powers that an angel of Satan had been sent to chasten him.

ii Somewhat similarly, but without any mention of Satan, and with a definite mention of serious fault, he says that some of the Corinthians were visited with sickness, and some died,[1] because of their irreverence at the Lord's Supper. In our Old Version this is called "eating and drinking *damnation*." In the Revised, it is more correctly translated "eateth and drinketh *judgment*." The Apostle adds, "when we are *judged*, we are chastened of the Lord that we may *not* be *condemned* with the world." The circumstances in which the Lord's Supper was profaned—it being apparently made part of a gluttonous and intoxicating revel—make it perfectly credible that the reaction from such excesses—as soon as the offender realized, with a shock, how he had offended—produced the effect of a sudden stroke of disease. Such a result would be but one of many symptoms of a mental condition (prevalent throughout the early Church) in which the mind influenced the body to an extent not possible, and not easily conceivable, in modern times.

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 30.

The formal "delivering over to Satan" was, perhaps, a power not exercised by the congregation, or elders, without apostolic presence or special apostolic sanction.

iii The self-executing sentence of death passed on Ananias and Sapphira,[1] and the temporary blinding of Elymas[2] "the sorcerer," rest on the authority of the Acts of the Apostles alone, evidence inferior both in date and weight to that of the Epistles. It is remarkable, however, that in these punishments, of which the former leaves very little room for "chastening" influence, there is no mention of "Satan." In the latter, "the hand of the Lord" is expressly mentioned.

§ 4

The "delivering over to Satan," instead of being sceptically rejected as a superstitious delusion, or apologetically passed over as an ancient but unedifying figure of speech, must be carefully considered along with other phenomena of the Church in those days, such as "the gift of tongues," the custom of "prophesying," and the performance of "mighty works" (which would include "healing" and "exorcism").

i It is true that they have all, long ago, completely vanished. But unless we keep them constantly in mind, trying to appreciate, in the first place, their positive effects in the period of their activity, and, in the next place, the negative effects resulting from their gradual evanescence, it is impossible to understand the

[1] Acts v. 1–11. [2] Acts xiii. 11.

evolution of the Christian religion, and its successes, and failures, in dealing first with a persecuting, then with a converted, world.

ii For our present purpose, however, the importance of these vestiges of the spirit of fervid enthusiasm that possessed the first congregations of the Pauline Churches consists in this, that they enable us to understand why we must not expect to find detailed rules for modern life set forth in, or deducible from, the Epistles of St. Paul.

It is clear that the Apostle, at least in his earlier Epistles, believed that Christ would speedily "come" and that the world would speedily be "judged": so that all questions as to the future government of the Church, as to the future relations between the Church and the Empire, and as to the prospects of the next generation of Christians, seemed out of place: "Why lay down rules for the guidance of the next generation, since, in all probability, there will be no next generation at all? Are we not daily expecting the coming of the Lord? Is it not almost certain that He will come before this generation has passed away? Let every man, then, abide in his calling. Let the slave remain in slavery. Let the unmarried remain unmarried—unless marriage is necessary for the purpose of avoiding sin. And so of the rest. Our eyes are to be fixed on the coming forth of the Lord. Let us fix them, without distraction."

Consequently, if we seek guidance as to the problems of modern life, business, art, science, education, social relations, political economy and politics, we shall search the Apostle's letters in vain for any practical counsel.

§ 5

What, then, if anything, can we learn from Pauline practice, that will bear upon modern life?

i We learn the indispensability of that "power" which comes from the belief that one is supported by the actual presence of Christ.

This belief may be superstitious, or non-moral, or even immoral, as when a wicked man fights bravely because he has "received absolution," or commits a murder intrepidly because he feels sure he can obtain "absolution"; but in any case it is efficacious for the purposes of action, *good* or *bad*. When men's conception of Christ is debased, their sense of Christ's presence becomes not genuine, but spurious; and then their religion may be worse than none. When the Spirit of Christ Himself is present, it is efficacious for the purest morality. But where there is no sense of Christ's presence, there can be no Christianity at all. There may be a noble Theism, and a high tone of morality, and even a philosophy that may call itself Christian; but the living religion of Christ there cannot be.

ii We learn the indispensability of such joint action as may enable Christians to claim the fulfilment of Christ's special promise to the "two or three gathered together" in His name. It is this that preserves His Spirit from being "quenched." Public worship, Holy Communion, joint philanthropic action, assume a new importance when we find, not only that Jesus laid stress on them, but also that the Church has never flourished

where collective worship and collective beneficence have been neglected.

iii It is the business of each generation of Christians to consider how they can keep their worship of Christ, and their sense of His presence, genuine and deep, and consequently fraught with "power." We have, now, hardly any of the special and phenomenal Pauline evidence: no "faith healing" (none, at least, in the Anglican Church), no gifts of "tongues," no missionaries who can say, "we have seen Christ." Our minds are not in the ecstasy or tension caused by the expectation of Christ's immediate coming.

So much the more are we bound to ask ourselves whether we have not advantages that may compensate for some or all of these disadvantages: what evidence have we that the Pauline Church had not? and by what means can we imprint this new evidence on our minds? and, if we have compensatory advantages, how can we make the utmost use of them?

In the following chapter an attempt will be made to suggest answers to some of these questions, so far as an answer can be found in ecclesiastical government and congregational life in Pauline and in modern times.

CHAPTER III

ECCLESIASTICAL GOVERNMENT

1 Church Authority

§ 1

It may be urged that, although the Pauline Epistles give us no detailed rules of life, they do lay down, or imply, rules for ecclesiastical government.

i "The great work of the Church," it is sometimes said, "is to convey the grace of Christ to believers through the Sacraments. The Sacrament of Holy Communion cannot be efficaciously administered except through a rightly ordained priest; and a priest cannot be rightly ordained unless he has received the laying on of hands in an unbroken succession from Christ through the Apostles and their successors. Bishops are the successors of the Apostles, and therefore episcopal government is a necessity for the Church."

ii The Pauline Epistles appear to recognize no such necessity. The Epistles to the Corinthians rather imply that no single "overseer" or "bishop" was responsible for the temporary anarchy which the Apostle censures.

The Epistle to the Philippians (which probably belongs to St. Paul's middle period) salutes "the deacons and bishops" of Philippi, but makes no mention of "elders"; and this suggests that here the "elders" were called "bishops." The Epistle to Titus (a later production, whether Pauline or otherwise), after exhorting Titus to "appoint *elders* in every city" of blameless conduct, "the husbands of one wife," and "having children that believe," continues, "for the *bishop* must be blameless." The inference is that "elders" meant "bishops" here, as "bishops" meant "elders" above. It would appear that, at first, the two terms were often used synonymously. In course of time the "elder," "presbyter," or "bishop," elected to preside at meetings of "elders," "presbyters," or "bishops," may have been called pre-eminently "*the* bishop"; then the other "elders," "presbyters," or "bishops," would gradually cease to be called "bishops."

§ 2

There is nothing in the Epistles to indicate any set ritual, or special vestments in public worship.

The first Epistle to the Corinthians shows that there was such a want of order as to threaten absolute disorder, owing to the obtrusive egotism of some members, each of whom had a "psalm," or a "teaching," or a "revelation," or a "tongue," or an "interpretation," which he desired to inflict on his fellow saints. Very needful, under such circumstances, was the warning of St. Paul that, if they thus obtruded their gift of "tongues," they would be thought mad by any in-

quirer who happened to be present. The "prophets," too, seem to have needed warning that, though they might be under spiritual influences, they were able, and bound, to control these influences for the general edification[1]: "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets."

§ 3

As regards the absolution of sins, it must be admitted that, in referring to, or enjoining, a meeting of the Corinthians[2] for the purpose of casting out a sinner, whom he afterwards[3] allows them to re-admit, the Apostle certainly does imply a conviction that the decision of the saints would be ratified by Christ Himself.

But on the former occasion the offence was patent, and the duty of the congregation manifest, so that he might safely say that the condemnation would be "in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus." On the latter occasion he says, "To whom ye forgive anything I forgive also: for what I also have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes have I forgiven it *before the face of Christ*."[4] But there is nothing here that might not be said by any Christian minister addressing his congregation from a distance. The offender had been censured by the mass of the congregation, and was in profound sorrow. The danger

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 32. [2] 1 Cor. v. 4–5, 2 Cor. ii. 8–11.

[3] See footnote [2] on Chap. ii. 2. § 2 above.

[4] The interpretation "in the person of Christ" is less probable.

now was lest he should be "swallowed up" by remorse. Did the Apostle shew any excessive confidence in the insight of the Corinthian elders by saying that, under these circumstances, he would ratify their decision of forgiveness—if they decided to forgive—genuinely and heartily, in the presence of Christ Himself?

In all this procedure there is very much that is against, and nothing that is for, mediæval notions of the efficacy of private sacerdotal absolution.

§ 4

A priori, it might have been expected—by those, at all events, who lay stress on the miraculous—that an Apostle, or at least one of the Twelve, though perhaps not capable of giving rules of detailed conduct adaptable to modern private life, might be regarded as infallible when setting an example, or giving rules, for the guidance of the Church.

i But the Epistles point to no such infallibility. St. Paul openly rebuked the Apostle St. Peter[1] for error of a nature to mislead believing Gentiles, and this, though the latter had been the first to admit Gentiles into the Church: and he implies that Barnabas (an Apostle, though not one of the Twelve) was "carried away" by the same error. But if these two could thus err, why not also St. Paul?

ii The error about which St. Paul expostulated with St. Peter related to the question whether Jews should

[1] Gal. ii. 11.

eat with Gentiles, that is to say, whether Christian Jews, mixing with Christian Gentiles, should give up such Levitical enactments as hindered social intercourse at meals.

A more serious question, from the Gentile point of view, was whether Gentile Christians might eat of "meats offered to idols." This was raised by St. Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians.[1] Now according to the Acts of the Apostles,[2] this question had already come before a Church Council at Jerusalem, attended by "the apostles and elders," among whom were St. Peter and St. James. The Council decided distinctly in the negative. Yet St. Paul, writing subsequently to this decision, pronounces the matter to be one of indifference, to be settled by each man's conscience for the general edification.

The inference is that St. Paul did not recognize in the Council of Jerusalem any infallible decision applying to Corinthian Christians.

§ 5

As regards Church Government, then—if we felt bound to imitate the Pauline Churches—what rules should we derive from St. Paul's Epistles? They would be these:

Each congregation ought to be presided over by a number of "elders," whom we may call either "elders," that is, "presbyters," or else "overseers," that is, "bishops." Where the number of these is sufficiently large to make it needful that one should act as

[1] 1 Cor. viii. 1. [2] Acts xv. 20.

"overseer" or "bishop" of the rest, that one may be conveniently called "*the* bishop."

Discord on the part of individual worshippers, each wishing to obtrude a "prophecy," prayer, psalm, or "tongue," is to be checked; but not, apparently, by suppressing such individual manifestations. Every one who feels moved to contribute to the congregational worship is to be allowed to do so, only, "in order."

Any flagrant offender against morality is to be "delivered over to Satan" by the whole congregation, laity and elders (or laity, elders, and bishop), acting "in the presence of Christ." But it is to be for the good of the soul of the offender, who is to be forgiven by the congregation when he repents.

§ 6

For further detailed rules we must look to the Pastoral Epistles, which are not universally attributed to St. Paul. And, even here, few rules are given for the qualifications of the "elders" or "bishops" except as to their moral qualities, on which the Epistles to Timothy and Titus lay great stress.

Apart from morality, the only rules laid down in these Epistles[1] are that they are first to serve as "deacons," and that they are to be married men with well-trained orderly families.

No rule is laid down for the method of appointing these "elders" or "bishops." But Timothy, who is to appoint them, is reminded[2] of the gift which he him-

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 2, 10; Tit. i. 6. [2] 1 Tim. iv. 14, comp. 2 Tim. i. 6.

self received "by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery"; and it is probable, for this and other reasons, that every bishop was thus to be appointed.

It is assumed that there is a class of "deacons," or "ministers," part of whose business would be to attend on the poor, sick and aged, and on any strangers entertained by the Church.

"Hospitality" is enjoined on all Christians[1]; but it is to be one of the special qualifications of the "bishop" or "elder."[2]

2 *Church Discipline in modern times*

§ 1

Most Christians still keep the "laying on of hands" as a part of the rite of ordination, although that outward and audible "sign" which sometimes followed the act in Pauline times has now disappeared. We also retain the distinction of "elders" and "deacons," and have followed the practice of the early Church in widening the distinction between the "bishop" and the "elder."

i But the "hospitality" of the bishop, the institution of special "ministers to the poor," that is, "deacons," in the old sense, the order of "widows" and other female workers referred to in the Pastoral

[1] Rom. xii. 13. [2] 1 Tim. iii. 2, Tit. i. 8.

Epistles as part of the Church organization, and generally, all those institutions that knit together a primitive Christian congregation into a compact concordant body in which each member knew and helped the rest, while each Church extended help to distant Churches in times of need—these things were gradually suffered to fall into abeyance, sometimes for sufficient reasons, sometimes for insufficient.

Also, as the world was drawn into the Church, so that the standard of Church life became more like that of the world, and that of the world more like that of the Church, the exercise of Church discipline, implying the casting out of flagrant offenders and the reinstating of sincere penitents, gradually fell into disuse.

ii As regards Church discipline, it is obviously better to have none, than to have a form of it that encourages hypocrisy. If we could lay down rules, or ensure authority with insight, by which our "elders" might distinguish real from unreal faith, deliberate from non-deliberate sins, genuine from pretended penitence, it would be well to entrust to them the power of exclusion from, and re-admittance to, the congregation; and, in theory, almost every Christian Church delegates such a power to some representative or representatives.

iii But in practice it is found, 1st, that judgments springing from spiritual insight are confined to a very few people of exceptional character, and these by no means always highly placed in the ecclesiastical ranks; 2nd, that judgments according to rules require (beside good intentions) a cool, impartial disposition, a clear

head, something of legal training, and leisure to study legal precedents: and for these qualifications we look rather to our lawyers than to our clergy. Hence, the place of the "elders" has been largely taken, in modern Christian Churches, by professional judges.

iv Ecclesiastical judges have not, indeed, been altogether displaced: but, in consequence of their inferiority to secular judges in decisions as to crimes, the former—at all events in Protestant Churches—have generally confined themselves (so far as discipline is concerned) to acts not punishable by the State but regarded by this or that congregation as unfit for "a consistent Christian"—for example, absence from Holy Communion, breaches of "the Sabbath," levity or profanity in language or behaviour, marriage with prohibited relations or with a member of some heretical congregation, dancing, theatre-going, and so on.

§ 2

The question, then, may be thus put against, and for, modern Church discipline:

i On the one hand, "Is it not better to have no Church discipline at all than one that confines itself to censuring outward acts, some of which might have passed unrebuked by St. Paul himself?"

ii On the other hand, "Is not great mischief caused by members of a congregation who merely attend for form's sake, who violate in their whole lives the spirit

of Christ's teaching, and who do this so openly as to create a public scandal, causing many, both inside and outside the congregation, to regard religion as a make-believe?"[1]

iii For modern times, and in great cities, perhaps the best result would be that a kind of self-executing Church discipline should spring up naturally in inner meetings and associations of Church members who are willing to devote leisure and pains to that modern more extensive "philanthropy" which, during this century, has taken the place of the primitive "hospitality."

Among these workers, the mere fashionable Christian will not care to enrol himself. But he is not excluded. He excludes himself. Meanwhile, the workers, coming to know one another well in the best possible way, that is to say, as colleagues in good works, may be led to participate, not only in an inner circle of worship, but also in such an interchange of spiritual thoughts as appears to have existed in the Corinthian Churches.

Church-law, or congregation-law, if it is not to usurp the functions of court-of-justice-law, but to supplement them, must take more cognizance of motives than is possible for the latter. But, in order to take cognizance of one another's motives, men must know one another

[1] A review in the *Literary World* (6 Oct. 1893) says, "Church discipline would hardly have excited the passionate enthusiasm with which it was unquestionably regarded by the great body of the people in old-world Scotland if it had not been felt to be, on the whole, instrumental in repressing vice and preventing the rich from preying on the poor"; and it speaks of the Church censure as falling heavily on the "habit of cheating the poor by dirty little tricks in business, or of telling slanderous lies, or of using foul language."

with an intimacy of knowledge that is far more possible in country parishes than in cities. Prayer-meetings help men to know one another; but perhaps work-meetings accompanied by prayer might, at all events in the first instance, accomplish the same result better because they would accomplish it indirectly, and with less danger of producing hypocrisy in some natures and in others a recoil from hypocrisy into reserve or opposition.

iv But when the spiritual harmony and development of this little esoteric band has been secured, what about the exoteric members of the congregation? Will they not be the ninety-nine sheep in the wilderness, while Church discipline is looking only to the one sheep in the pasture? The outside, worldly, fashionable people —are they not just the people who are most likely to need to be disciplined? What a spectacle of inconsistency, if one of these, known by many members of the congregation to be guilty of "cheating the poor by dirty little tricks in business, or of telling slanderous lies, or of using foul language," goes unchecked to the Lord's table, while one of the inner circle, far less faulty, yet guilty of some temporary lapse, refrains because he has been directly or indirectly censured by the band of fellow-workers whose judgment he respects? Moreover, will not the "ninety-nine" be positively injured by being thus definitely marked off from the "one," just as, in the Church of Rome, the laity were demoralized by the custom of reserving the epithet "religious" for members of a monastic order?

v These difficulties must be frankly admitted. The only remedy, in a metropolitan congregation, seems to be that there should be *no* non-workers, and that the members should be encouraged to form separate groups among themselves, united by community of tastes, pursuits, and religious opinions, all converging to one centre, but converging from quite different points of view. In one of these groups extempore prayers, and hymns, might be the prevailing element; in another, the reading of such a poem as the *In Memoriam*; a third might study the Old or New Testament in the light, or without the light, of modern criticism; a fourth might discuss Church History; a fifth, political economy, or the Poor Laws, or Elementary Education: but all should have before them some paper of parochial *agenda*, indicating the special work of Christ for the time being on which the attention of the congregation was to be concentrated.

vi Some Church discipline, direct or indirect—springing out of Church work and Church worship—is perhaps essential to any powerful revival of Christian congregational life. And the revivification that we have witnessed during this century in the Church of England, and (still more) the marvellous growth and activity of the Wesleyan Methodists, appear largely due to the fact that there has been some recurrence to the Pauline ideal of a congregation, a little army in the face of a hostile world of sin and moral disease. As in Israel of old, the presence of an enemy serves to eliminate the faint-hearted Christian, or to convert him into a stout-hearted one: "Hear, O Israel, ye approach

this day unto battle against your enemies. . . What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? Let him go and return unto his home, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart."

But how little of detail can we find in the Epistles of St. Paul to aid us in approximating to an ideal of this kind in a manner suited to modern times!

§ 3

As for the "hospitality" of the Church, although it was long kept up by the monasteries in England, and is still practised in some religious houses on the Continent in regions where inns are non-existent, the general practice has disappeared along with the need of it.

But might not the primitive custom, of which we find traces in St. Paul's Epistles, of passing on a "brother" from one congregation to another by letters commendatory, be more generally[1] practised with great advantage in modern times? And, if it were in practice, might not intending immigrants from city to city, and especially from the country to our greater cities, be in some cases introduced at once into a sphere of healthy, useful, and moral life? in others, at least partially prepared for novel and trying circumstances and warned against new temptations? in others, perhaps, deterred from immigrating at present, or from immigrating at all?

Moreover, as we do not practise Church hospitality

[1] The writer is speaking with special reference to Anglicans; not to Nonconformists and the Church of Scotland, where the custom is probably more prevalent than in the Church of England.

to those who come from without, would it not be well if each congregation did somewhat more for those within, in the way of systematically encouraging and aiding its own poor and aged to make provision for themselves? Even when the State has, perhaps, established some national pension system for the thrifty based on the national credit, will there not be exceptional cases that will be better dealt with locally and by neighbours than by State machinery?

§ 4

As to the qualification that a bishop shall be "the husband *of one wife*," and have his children in good control, although the Greek Church lays stress on it, the Roman Church maintains that he is to be unmarried; or, at least, to live unmarried as a bishop.

Good sense dictates that an unmarried man should not be rejected if he has the gift of governing firmly, sympathetically, and wisely: and it is possible to interpret the apostolic dictum as mainly contemplating the establishment of a general rule that a bishop must not have entered into a second marriage after divorce (a common custom in those times). But still it needs some hardihood, while accepting as apostolic the dictum about a bishop's "*one* wife," to maintain (with the Church of Rome) that a bishop should have *no* wife.

§ 5

The "laying on of hands" in ordination is one of the very few ecclesiastical details of Pauline Church government that still remain in force.

i For those who are receiving ordination in a right spirit, the act cannot fail to be a means of grace. In any case, it is impressively symbolical, even though the old sign of "speaking with tongues," which sometimes followed the apostolic act, has long since disappeared. To many it would seem still more impressive if they could be certain that by a direct succession from one "elder" to another, back to the Apostles themselves, those who are now ordained are brought into a transmitted physical as well as spiritual contact with Jesus Himself.

Some, indeed, feel this certainty about the "elders" in the Roman, Greek, and Anglican Churches, or at all events about the "elders" in the first two of these three Churches. And there are some who regard this certainty as absolutely necessary for their spiritual security. They believe that, where a single link in the chain of physical contact has been broken or dislocated (not to speak of other dislocations arising from heresy or other spiritual causes) there the grace of the sacraments is not transmitted, subsequently to the period of dislocation; or, if transmitted, it is latent, or dormant, or—to speak popularly and intelligibly—of no practical use for the purposes of "covenanted salvation."

ii Thus, the Roman Church does not admit the "apostolical succession" of the clergy of the Church of England. Learned and candid historians throw somewhat similar doubts on its continuity even in the Church of Rome. And indeed, the disorders and irregularities of certain periods in Latin Christianity may well make it natural to question (and of, course, impossible to

prove) the invariable preservation of the chain of physical contact: especially if materialistic questions are raised (such as we find in some of the Fathers) concerning the efficacy or non-efficacy of the laying on of hands when (whether wilfully or otherwise) the head or hand is covered or the hand is not brought into contact with the head.

iii To those who believe that Jesus prescribed the preservation of this chain of physical contact as an essential condition for the acceptance of His grace, it is idle to speak of compensation for its being broken or for uncertainty whether it has been broken or not. They, indeed, if uncertain, are condemned to a double misery; partly because they are forced to doubt about their eternal salvation; partly because they have formed a conception of Jesus so debased as to dream that He would thus limit the motions of His Spirit, and would doom multitudes to immediate torturing suspense, and other multitudes to ultimate endless torture, or to limited punishment—or to any disadvantage whatever, resulting from causes over which they had no control.

iv Others may learn to regard the uncertainty of this continuity, or even the certainty that the continuity has been broken, as no less providential than other apparent imperfections in the means of salvation imparted to the Church. What, for example, can be a more startling imperfection in such a written revelation as the New Testament than the discrepancies between our Evangelists, the various readings, the interpolations, and the obscurities that make its interpretation

uncertain? Yet has not this uncertainty been a benefit, so far as it has prevented us from converting the New Testament into a Law, and from making ourselves the slaves of the letter? In the same way, the uncertainty about the continuity of what may be called "physical apostolical succession" may be intended to fix our thoughts on the inner meaning of the rite: that is to say, on "spiritual apostolical succession," so as to prevent us from converting a symbolical means of grace into an essential condition for it.

§ 6

Our conclusion from a review of the Pauline Epistles, so far as they bear on Church government and discipline, is this, that, while full of spiritual aid and indirect suggestiveness, they contain no rules, positive or negative, that we can mechanically obey.

The great antinomian Apostle will certainly mislead us if we try to erect his dicta into a law. We are ready to admit this on some points; but why not on all? As regards entering into marriage, few will now deny that his earlier teaching was based on misconception: but even in his later epistles, as regards the relations between husband and wife, and the province and functions of women in social and political life, who will maintain that we find definite and detailed rules adaptable for modern times, and sufficient to form canons of ecclesiastical law or discipline? Similarly, as to the relations between masters and servants (or rather slaves): few will deny that St. Paul has laid too little stress (for us) on the ultimately elevating moral effects

of liberty. But, if so, it follows that he may have also laid too little stress (for us) on fasts, feasts, rites and ceremonies. He scorned to "observe days." But we may need to observe them. Something approaching to Jewish ceremonial and ritual may be more needful for us than St. Paul found it to be for Galatians or Corinthians. We are not under any yoke, not even under that of St. Paul, in matters of this kind. Men must have a Church ritual and a Church government that suit them, if they are to be a visible Church.

None the less, St. Paul's essential teaching on the whole subject stands fast for ever—namely, that we are to make Church ritual and government; they are not to make us. It is the Spirit of Christ that makes us. Fasts, feasts, ceremonies, rites, and even the sacraments themselves, are only so far valuable as they are found by the continued experience of patient believers to bring Christ near them and to keep alive in their hearts His quickening "power."

CHAPTER IV

OUTLINE OF PAULINE THEOLOGY

1 St. Paul's spiritual insight

§ 1

Our theological indebtedness to St. Paul may be described in one aspect as personal. He, personally, has seen the risen Saviour and heard His voice; and, taking us as it were by the hand, he makes us feel that we, too, can see what he saw and hear what he heard. But the Apostle's fervent faith in Christ's resurrection is based on something more than that one brief vision and utterance near the walls of Damascus. It has, also, for its foundations, the general work of the Logos or pre-incarnate Christ, the revelation of God in the nature of man, and in the history of all mankind and particularly of Israel; and it is confirmed by what he witnesses, in himself and in the saints, of an evolution of a church from a world, a triumph of "weak" things over "strong," invisible over visible—all arising from God's eternal relations with His Son, and, through His Son, with the children of men. Now all this is "theology": and unless we receive some tincture of

St. Paul's theology we cannot fully receive his personal conviction. So, after all, if we really are indebted to the Apostle, our debt, though personal, is theological too.

§ 2

In order to do justice to St. Paul's theology, we must avoid confusing his principles (which are permanent and universal) with his arguments and illustrations (which in many cases are peculiar to his time or to himself).

His general guide is not logic, but the inspiration of the Spirit of Christ, that is to say, unconscious harmony with the Word of God, the divine Law of human nature. Hence, most of what he feels is for all time. But what he alleges in proof of what he feels is often (to us) no proof at all. Sometimes it is mere illustration, sometimes nothing but intensely earnest asseveration of what is to be proved—so strangely assuming the semblance of argument as almost to excuse the grotesque error of the old commentator who said that "St. Paul frequently *uses 'for' instead of 'therefore'*"!

§ 3

Some critics, who caution us against "reading into St. Paul the notions of modern morality," appear themselves to require a caution against forgetting that modern "notions" may be anticipated by ancient intuition.

When we point out how naturally and consistently

all the characters of Shakespeare act and speak, we do not maintain that Shakespeare was conscious of all those shades of his own excellent discrimination which we so elaborately explain. If he had been, he could not have created the characters. He created in conformity (largely unconscious) with the laws of human nature, aided by the intuition of genius.

And so of St. Paul we say that he had the insight of spiritual genius. Or, to put it more exactly in his own words, he had "the mind of Christ."

2 *"Flesh," "Law," "Sin"*

§ 1

There are two antagonistic promptings in man, namely, "the flesh" and "the spirit." Here "in" implies a metaphor. We might express the same thing by saying that man will be two different beings according as *he is* "*in* the flesh," or "*in* the spirit." Thus used, "in" would imply a different metaphor. The spirit "in the man" represents man as a machine moved by internal springs; the man "in the spirit," as an organism influenced by an external atmosphere.

"The flesh" means the animal appetite or instinct to "do as we like" without regard to others. This instinct—natural and blameless in most "irrational animals" and in the young of rational animals—becomes "contra-natural" and blameworthy in animals that partake of reason, as, for example, dogs, and far

more so in human animals as soon as they become conscious of a higher will.

§ 2

Until we recognize a will (superior to our own) which dictates what we "ought" to do, we are able to "do what we *like*" without misgiving and without sin. But as soon as we recognize what is "right" as distinct from what is "pleasant," we are conscious of a coercive pressure which our animal nature does not "like" and consequently kicks against. This pressure, when thus recognized and disliked, we call "Law."

§ 3

The first recognition of "Law" outside us is naturally accompanied by a recognition of resistance to it within us. This resistance is called "Sin." Thus, along with the recognition of "Law" comes the recognition of "Sin."

i Sin is dormant till Law steps in and says, "Do this or that no longer: for, though it is pleasant, it is *wrong*," or, "Do this new thing: for, though painful, it is *right*."

Then, at once, Sin, like a torpid snake placed before a scorching fire, leaps into life. Our old, contented, peaceful, animal nature, in which we "lived" so pleasantly, disappears, or "dies," as sin "revives"; and we become a new nature, half-animal, half-spiritual, in which "the spirit" contends against "the flesh," and

"the flesh" against "the spirit." This is the doctrine of St. Paul,[1] "For I was alive without Law once; but when the commandment came, sin *revived*, and I *died*." The "I" is the "old nature," the "old man," or the "flesh," or the "unaided self," untroubled, unconvicted —and unhelped—by the Spirit.

"The flesh," then, does not mean the tangible flesh, but an impulse. In the graphic passage above quoted, St. Paul calls it "I," because, for the sake of putting things briefly and vividly, he momentarily identifies himself with it, as he had been identified in old days; but, as a rule, he calls it "the flesh," because it is in the flesh that it seems to have its home.

ii By whatever name it may be called, whether "covetousness," or "lust," or "greediness," or "selfishness," "the flesh" always implies making oneself the centre of one's own thoughts and desires.

"Covetousness" is the only motive (as distinct from overt action) forbidden in that part of the Decalogue which regulates our duty to our neighbour. Though it is not included there in the list of duties to God, St. Paul calls it "idolatry": and so indeed it is—the most fatal form of idolatry. Some "idols" men can see and therefore avoid or destroy. But the object of this idolatry is invisible. Nominally, a "covetous" man may be serving other gods and lords besides himself. If so, he may try to bribe them with gifts, sacrifices, and servile petitions. But in any case, his inward prayer is always "*My* will be done."

Such a one has none to work for, none to obey, but

[1] Rom. vii. 9.

himself. But, says the Apostle, whomsoever we obey, we *serve*. The man is therefore the servant or slave of his covetous self, a self lower than that of the brute beasts in whom coveting is not yet separated from desiring. But this lower self is perishable; and servitude to it—so St. Paul taught—identifying the servant with the perishable master, brings on the former a liability to perish likewise. Thus, it is not only a servitude to sin, but also a succumbing to spiritual death.

3 *"Righteousness," "Faith," "Grace"*

§ 1

St. Paul did not deny that, both for Israel under the Law, and for the Gentiles who were ignorant of the Law, the Spirit of God was at work, enlightening and spiritualizing the human conscience: but he implies that this enlightenment was but partial. It merely gave men light enough to feel their way toward the source of light.

i But then arose the Jewish question, "What do you say concerning Abraham our father, the friend of God? Was *he* not righteous? and if so, what need had *he* of the revelation of the 'light' in Christ?" This led the Apostle to the consideration of "righteousness," which, among the Jews, in spite of protests from the Prophets and Psalmists, had come, too generally,

to mean the performance of acts prescribed by the Law of Moses.

The Tenth Commandment always remained a standing contradiction of Jewish legalism; just as the Sermon on the Mount, and the whole of St. Paul's Epistles, contradict the theory of Christian legalism. But as, now, many Christians are guilty of legalism, so, in St. Paul's time, the Jews seem to have generally become religious legalists. With them, to be "righteous" was to perform the outward acts enjoined by the Law and the Traditions. To be a Gentile was necessarily to be a "sinner."

ii The fourth Gospel solves the problem of the "righteousness" of the Gentiles and Abraham by reference to Christ as the Eternal Word that "lighteth every man," and through whom "all things were made": Abraham "rejoiced that he might see the day" of this Deliverer, "and he saw it and was glad." That is to say, as the "word" reveals the "thought" in those vibrations of the air which we call speech, so the Son had been revealing the Father, before the Incarnation, through the shaping and development of all human and non-human nature.

St. Paul implies a similar doctrine. Christ, he says, was the Rock of nourishment for Israel during their forty years of wandering in the wilderness. He was the Son of God who was "sent" into the world by the Father.

In shape and expression the Johannine doctrine undoubtedly differs from the Pauline. Whereas the fourth Gospel says that Abraham "saw," the Epistles declare

that he "believed." The former, as has been shewn above, does not so much as once use the word "faith" (which is found repeatedly in every other book of the New Testament); in the latter, "faith" is the basis of all righteousness. Yet spiritually the two writers are at one. Both teach that all righteousness comes from the eternal Word of God which men receive into themselves through "believing."

§ 2

The Pauline use of the terms "faith," "grace," "righteousness," and "justification,"[1] becomes easily intelligible when regarded as part of a protest in behalf of spiritual morality against the neo-Judaic conception of a "righteousness" resulting from outward acts enjoined by "Torah" or Law.

If "righteousness" consisted largely in such actions as the washing of utensils, the purification of the body, and the separation of defilements from meat and drink, and if the need of some of these acts could be deduced only from a very subtle interpretation of Torah, simple people might constantly be "unrighteous," living in fear of making themselves

[1] For "justification," see chap. vi. below. The verb "justify" is applied to a judge who "declares righteous" an accused person: "justification" means such a "declaration of righteousness." It is unfortunate that the true meaning of the word has no brief equivalent in English. "Justification" is brief, but liable to grave misunderstandings: moreover, by using "justification," we miss that connection between kindred words ("righteous," "righteousness," "declare righteous," "declaration of righteousness") which, if ignored, obscures the most important of St. Paul's Epistles.

"unrighteous," and calling it "sin" (for example) to swallow a gnat in wine!

Dealing with God as the Giver of so unjust a Law as this, men would reduce Him—so far as their thoughts were concerned—to the position, not of a Father but of a Taskmaster, simultaneously reducing themselves to the position, not of children, but of servants. Then all their actions, even their alms, would become "dead works," or "works of the Law," that is to say, works done mechanically, and by rule, not out of the glow of gratitude or filial love, but through fear of punishment, or hope of reward; and all their "righteousness" would consist of an accumulation of such "works," placed to their credit by the Taskmaster from whom they were expecting wages.

§ 3

Against all these fictions St. Paul maintained, in effect, that "*All* righteousness springs from a trust, or faith, in the Supreme Righteousness, that is, God. Abraham himself received his righteousness through trust in God. The saying of Scripture that 'Abraham trusted in God and it was reckoned to him for righteousness' shewed God's plan and course *from the beginning*. No real righteousness has ever been possible for those whose relations with God have been those of slaves or mercenaries."

i Further, the Apostle taught that the precedence of the Promise to Abraham also threw light on the subsequent introduction of the Law. The Promise was (so to speak) God's "first thought." The Law was (so to

speak) His "afterthought." It "was *added*," says St. Paul; and he declares that it was a temporary and imperfect measure, rendered necessary by the imperfections of men, in order to prepare the way for the fulfilment of the Promise. God's original and ideal conception—to speak again in human metaphor—of the relation between Himself and man, was represented by Promise and not by Law.

ii How the narrative of the Promise to Abraham may be interpreted so as to explain the moral value of the Patriarch's faith, has been described above.[1] We are not bound to accept the narrative as historical in the full sense in which St. Paul probably accepted it: but we are bound to admit that the Pauline doctrine, so far, is in accordance with a high and intelligible morality.

"No children can obey their father as they ought, if they obey simply through desire of reward or fear of punishment," "'Righteousness' depends not on the outward act but on the motive":—are not these propositions mere truisms now for all that are not blinded by a "Law"? If we knew all about a "motive"—knew it with the all-knowledge of God—should not we, too, be able unerringly to "reckon" motive "for righteousness"? Surely we do this daily, as a matter of course, even though we often make mistakes in doing it; and, unless we did it, family life would be reduced to the life of the law-courts, and morality would disappear.

[1] Book II. ii. 1.

§ 4

The word "grace" in the Epistles, though not adequately expressible by any one English word, is best explained, not by classical Greek usage, but by its meaning in the Septuagint, and especially in the customary phrase "If I have found *grace*, or *favour*, in thy sight."

Servants in a household are in a lower or higher atmosphere, according as they are "out of *favour*" or "in *favour*" with the lord of the household. His children are always supposed to be "in *favour*" with him. But, besides meaning "favour," the Greek word also implies good-will on both sides—kindly encouragement, consideration, readiness to make allowance, on the part of the master or father; respect, gratitude, and affection, on the part of the servant or child.

Christ has lifted us out of the lower atmosphere of "Law," fear, and servitude, where the highest morality is impossible, into the glorious freedom of "grace," favour, and good-will, wherein alone we can know God as a Father and serve Him as children should.

§ 5

If we ask how Christ thus lifts us up into the region of His grace, the answer is, Through the revelation of the Father as one with Himself, revealed to our hearts in His life, death, and resurrection.

Concerning the life of Jesus on earth St. Paul has

nothing to say. He left the "teachers" to narrate the facts of the Evangelic history. Concerning His resurrection he does, on one occasion, enter into detail for a special purpose, namely, to vindicate its truth against those who maintained that there was no resurrection of the dead, to enumerate the manifestations to the apostles and disciples (including himself), and to show that it was in harmony or analogy with the laws of material Nature. But his main task is not that of a historian, but that of a "prophet," namely, to unfold the purpose of God in subjecting His Son to a humiliating death, which the Apostle regards, not only as preceding, but also as in some sense contributing to, or causing, the rising again of Christ Himself, and of all mankind in Him.

To dwell on Christ's death was all the more needful because some Christians were disposed to pass it over, or, as it were, to apologize for it. In a few years, there was to arise the sect of the Docetae, who denied that He died at all: and the tendency to such a denial was already apparent. Such a state of mind indicated a failure to enter into the meaning of the great Law of victory through suffering, life through death, forgiveness through sacrifice. These men regarded the crucifixion, in its connection with Jesus, as we should regard suffering on the gallows. To them the Cross was a "scandal" or "stumbling-block." To St. Paul it seemed a veritable foundation-stone of belief, the one difficulty—if difficulty it was—that must not be minimized even for the weakest brethren, because they could not become strong till they had

fully realized it. "Ignore everything else, but not that," is what he says, in effect, to the Corinthians:[1] "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him *crucified*."

[1] 1 Cor. ii. 2.

CHAPTER V

CHRIST AS A SACRIFICE

1 The meaning of Sacrifice

§ 1

St. Paul's determination "not to know anything" among the Corinthians, "save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," brings us face to face with the question, "How does the death of Christ avail to reveal God to us, or to lift us up to God?" The difficulty in answering is twofold, partly of a historical nature, partly of our own making.

The death of Christ is called, and rightly, a "sacrifice." But if we ask what "sacrifice" means, we are led back to the origin and history of pre-Christian sacrifices. These, always imperfect, and often grossly superstitious and immoral, have so darkened what we may call the sacrificial vocabulary that the significance of Christ's act has often been obscured or distorted by the verbal medium in which even pious men have expressed their thoughts about it.

Christians themselves have sometimes fallen almost below the Pagan level in treating of the central point

of the Christian religion. Instead of studying human nature at its best in the hope of apprehending, as far as possible, what we believe to have been the highest effort of human nature since the creation of man, we have been (too often) content either to take as our guides dry argumentations from which the controversial spirit has excluded all sense of morality: or else, if we have turned to human nature for our illustrations at all, we have taken humanity at its worst, borrowing the language of the shop and the market-place, as if God were a "forensic" Person or a spiritual Usurer.

§ 2

In reality, "sacrifice" is simply the conforming of one's will to that of God:—not merely saying, but feeling, so as to put into act, the words "Thy will be done." It is the exact opposite of the "idolatrous selfishness" defined above in the words "*My* will be done."

i But it is God's will that man should be conformed to His image. For this purpose man needs to be brought out of the atmosphere of servitude, fear, and Law, into that of "liberty" and "grace," where God will be his Father and he God's child. Now this cannot be, as long as the sense of sin unforgiven alienates man from God and forces him to regard God as an enemy.

It follows, then, that there is a connection between sacrifice and the forgiveness of sins. When a man is

offering up a real sacrifice and conforming his will to God's, he is having his sins put away from him, or forgiven: again, when he is being forgiven, he is being made at one with God, and being conformed to God's will; that is, he is offering the true sacrifice.

ii God's forgiveness is conveyed to one human being through another human being. It would seem that there is no other way.

Some may urge that the forgiveness of God may be, and has been, conveyed to men sometimes through a book. But a book *is* a man—a man speaking in dumb show.

"But a man may receive forgiveness through a vision." Possibly. Yet will not the vision be of a human character, springing from human influences that have found expression in the vision? Did a man ever receive either conviction of sin, or forgiveness of sin, from the glories of the stars or from any spectacle or influence of non-human nature? Is there not a spiritual truth latent in the fact that Saul the persecutor, even after he had been thought worthy to hear and see the Saviour, did not receive forgiveness and peace till "a man named Ananias" came and called him "brother," and laid his hands on him, repeating a message of forgiveness from Christ?

iii Parents can sometimes forgive the sins of their little children, even where the sin is not against the parents but against morality. If the father (feeling what he says) can say to a child who has told a lie to a stranger, "I forgive you, and I feel sure you will not do

it again," the child, in proportion to the power of forgiving possessed by the father, feels that he is forgiven, that the burden of his fault is taken from him, and that he is strengthened against future temptations to falsehood.

One reason why parents and intimate friends have this strange power of absolution is that they know the very heart of the offender. But another reason appears to be that they so love him, and so sympathize with him, as to be pained by the offence.

2 The Connection between Sacrificing and Forgiving

§ 1

This last fact should lead us, on reflection, to perceive that, in this deep spiritual sense, none can really forgive a sin in another, unless he realizes the sin with something of pain.

As long as a man regards the sin of another as a mere inconvenience, whether to himself or to society, he cannot really forgive it. In order to forgive, he must regard it sympathetically, as affecting himself and, in some sense, belonging to him. Every one realizes this in cases when a man is sorrowing for the sin of a son or of a brother. But the ideal Forgiver must regard all men as sons or brothers, so that the sins of all men are, in some sense, his own.

But, in order to forgive sin, the Forgiver, while

realizing it as a disease or stain, must realize it, too, as a disease that can be healed, a stain that can be effaced. Otherwise, all the sorrow in the world cannot cleanse away a single spot of sin. In the mixture of feeling, "I forgive you, but I know you will do the same thing to-morrow," forgiveness is paralysed by faithlessness.

Consequently, the Forgiver needs, in addition to the pain of the sense of sin, the hopeful trust that sin is not a part of man's nature in the highest sense.

§ 2

By "man's nature in the highest sense," we mean Christ; and hence to the hopeful trust just mentioned we give the name of "Christian faith."

We might call it by many different phrases all tending to the same result:—"faith in Christ," "faith in the Eternal Son," "faith in human nature as it exists in the thought of God," "faith in man as he will be," "faith in God as the Father of man," "faith in man as the son of God," "faith that the outcome of the evolution of all things will be found to be good," "faith that good will ultimately prevail over evil," "faith that sin itself will ultimately be seen to have been subordinated to the purpose of a higher righteousness than could have been attained if man had never sinned."

Again, this "faith" looks forward to a future that is not yet attained, to a Kingdom about which we must constantly pray that it *may* come instead of exulting that it *has* come, and to an invisible and spiritual change of human will that we can hardly hope to see realized in this visible and material system of

things. Consequently, we may speak of it as a "faith" in realities against appearances, a struggle in behalf of the invisible against the visible, a battle for the next world against "this world."

§ 3

Hence, we may perceive what "this world" means in St. Paul's Epistles, and how the struggle against "this world" is connected with "the victory of faith" and the power of "forgiving sin."

i The beautiful and glorious structure of the Universe—so far as it is not made subject to "vanity," that is, to corruption—is not what St. Paul means by "this world." On the contrary, "the earth," he says, "is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof."

But as soon as a man regards the world as it is, without regard to what it will be and ought to be, he throws away the human prerogative of forethought with its hopes and aspirations and divinely inspired discontents, and either sinks to the level of a beast, looking on the world as a present pasturage, or else degrades himself still lower because, with the knowledge of death before him, he says, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

The immediate consequence of this animal, fleshly, or selfish view of the Universe is, that, instead of revealing to him the attributes of the Lord, everything around him begins to suggest his own pleasure, his own comfort or discomfort, so that, from being a transparent or semi-transparent glass through which to view the

Creator, the whole world is transmuted into a mirror giving back to the "man in the flesh" the reflection of his own fleshly self. This he worships, and to this he is enslaved.

Thus "this world" is seen to be the same thing as "the flesh," only regarded from a different point of view. "The flesh" is internally, "this world" is externally, an impulse to covetousness or selfishness. To yield to either is servitude.

ii Philo asserts that, as soon as a man calls anything material absolutely his own, he "must be written down a slave." Epictetus would have agreed. And the doctrine of St. Paul is to the same effect, namely, that one must hold oneself detached from present and material things, using them as instruments for divine purposes. Then, and then alone, do we master them instead of their mastering us.

§ 4

While thus endeavouring to thread the labyrinth of "this world," or "the flesh," we have been, perhaps unconsciously, drawing near to the secret of its inmost defect, its inability to "remit sins." No man of "this world," so far as he is consistently worldly in the Pauline sense, can ever forgive.

i This may seem, for a moment, a flat contradiction of daily experience. "Do not 'men of the world,'" it may be asked, "constantly show sympathy and kindness towards suffering sinners who appeal in vain to cold

ecclesiastics?" Undoubtedly. But "men of *the* world" are very often—and most often in a Christian "world" largely leavened by Christian thought—far from being what St. Paul would call "men of *this* world." On the other hand, the "cold ecclesiastic," recluse though he may be from society, and ascetic though he may be as to the five senses of the flesh, may run to the most riotous excess in the indulgence of that sixth sense which supplies the choicest province to that "ruler of this world" whom the New Testament writers call "the adversary" or "the evil one"—I mean, selfish ambition of a religious character; the desire of a minister of religion to exercise power over men not for their sakes but for his own; the lust for a consciousness of superiority based on other men's inferiority; the craving to play the part of a god over men not by being god-like but by reducing men to puppets, or, reversing the words of Christ, "not to minister but to be ministered to, and to make men's souls a ransom for one's own." Such covetousness as this, approaching more closely than any other to the character of the diabolical "world-ruler," is distinguished in the New Testament from the lower grades described as "the flesh" and "the world." The Publican, the Herodian, and the Pharisee, are all slaves. But while the first two are slaves of "the flesh" or "the world," it is reserved for the Pharisee to be the slave of "the devil."

ii In the legal world, no slave can forgive debts; for a slave can own nothing. So it is, also, in the spiritual world. The greedy, and the covetous, and the ignobly or diabolically ambitious, are slaves—slaves

of "this world" and of their animalized or diabolized selves; incapable of the mighty spiritual conquests reserved for those who are "poor in spirit," hungering after righteousness, and endowed with "authority to lay down life" for mankind.

iii The covetous man, if he tries to give, makes his gifts no gifts by grudging them. A beggar can often give half his fortune, can give, at least, his sympathy. But were there an entirely covetous being, he could give absolutely nothing, not even a helpful word. He "hath not"; and from him "hath been taken" even that which he seemed to have. How could such a pitiable pauper as this act as the almoner of the Father of the Crucified in bestowing the purest and most precious of all gifts, the forgiveness of sins?

§ 5

In modern days we have almost forgotten the meaning of the word "forgiveness" because we have confused it with the remission of penalty or else have stifled it under fictions of sacerdotal absolution. But the fact remains, as we read it in Shakespeare, that there is no act in which man so closely approaches God as in forgiving.

i Summing up the requirements for this most divine and difficult of human "mighty works," we perceive that the ideal Forgiver must have, in an infinite degree, love of sinful mankind, sympathetic sense of their burden, horror of sin as the most loathsome and

destructive of diseases, and finally, trust in God as the Father of man, whose will it is that, by the healing of sin, man shall be in the end conformed to the Divine image.

ii Do not some of the qualifications of the Forgiver appear to conflict with each other? In proportion as he loves the light of communion with God, and hates the darkness of sin, will he not be tempted to flee into solitude where he can forget the darkness and rejoice in the light? On the other hand, if he tears himself from solitude in order to force himself into contact with sin, will he not be tempted to distrust God—who seems to have allowed man to sin—sensible as he is (beyond our apprehension) of the foulness of spiritual disease, of the dangers of spiritual death, and feeling, by sympathy, something of the inexpressible darkness that rises in the heart of the sinner with the very thought of God's unseen or averted face? Lastly, might not the very perfectness of his trust in God induce the Forgiver to say, "This business can be safely left in His hands. He cannot desire me to pain my spirit by contact with that which He Himself abhors. Enough for me to proclaim the Fatherhood of God. The Father Himself will bring it home to men's hearts."

iii These three considerations, and especially the third, would lead us to the conclusion that the life of Jesus (as well as His death) is to be regarded as of the nature of a conflict, throughout which, fixing His thoughts continually on the divine Will, He conformed Himself to it, and, as the Epistle to the

Hebrews says, "learned obedience through the things that he suffered": and there is abundant evidence from the Gospels to prove this. But we have seen that such a conformity to God's will is just what we mean by sacrifice. And hence the phenomena of common life appear to combine with evangelic and apostolic testimony in justifying the belief that Christ's whole life, so far as He conveyed to men the Divine forgiveness of sins, must have been a "sacrifice" in which "he was bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement of our peace was upon him."

§ 6

It is a strange method of making men better, first to let them become bad, and then to let good people pain themselves in order to raise them from their badness. But it is the way of the world—that is to say, the spiritual world. There is much more to be said for it than at first sight appears. Shakespeare gives us an inkling of it when he speaks of mercy as "twice blest." We may indict the process, if we please, for incomprehensibility, wastefulness, circuitousness, non-morality, and (if we are bold enough) immorality; but, if we do, we must indict all humanity, nay, we might almost say, the Universe of life.

For it is in strict accordance with the laws of Nature, whereby sin brings misery, not only on the offender, but also on the society of which he is a member—a Retribution that, on the whole, in spite of its seeming injustice, works so much good—and moreover so much good *out of evil*, by shewing men the ruinous conse-

quences of selfishness and scourging them into unselfishness—that we hesitate to call it unjust, even when our eyes are fixed on this life alone, still more when we include a future where we trust it may be proved to have been, under the circumstances, the highest possible justice.

The philosopher Philo implied this as a law of human nature when he said that "every good man is a mediator between his neighbours and God." How, "mediator"? Because he stands on a height, reflecting, as it were, something of the Light to those who are below. He does more. He draws them up to his own level. But this "drawing up" can never be effected without effort; and this spiritual effort, at the highest, is the highest kind of "sacrifice."

Use, or abuse, metaphors as we please, we cannot deny that Philo has struck on a deep truth, of which modern times are far too ignorant. To this day, one hears many excellent persons asseverating that they have "no need of any one to mediate" between them and God, unconscious, all the while, that they are themselves "mediators" between God and others.

CHAPTER VI

MAN'S JUSTIFICATION

1 God's Forgiveness

§ 1

At this point we must return to the consideration of "faith" with a special reference to the part played by it in "justification," which follows, or accompanies, forgiveness.

i "Faith," like love, may be a virtue or a vice according to its object. We may have faith in ourselves or others, in money, force, knowledge, in the dogmas of a Church, in the conclusions of reason, in a god, good or bad. But, in the Epistles of St. Paul, it means faith in that God who is revealed to us in Christ —and especially Christ crucified and raised from the dead.

Not that St. Paul sets up an opposition between two Gods, the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New; but he teaches us to consider the Old as fulfilled, and absorbed, in the New. The God who created the first Man, the earthy, the "living soul," was

the same who foreordained from the beginning the coming of the last Man, the heavenly, the "life-giving Spirit"; and the first is but a prophecy, fulfilled in the last.

Faith in Christ includes faith in the Christ that guarded Israel in the wilderness, faith in the Word of God that shaped the Chosen People to prepare the way for the coming of the Christ on earth.

ii It is assumed that the experiences of Jesus Christ, "the last Man," give us a special revelation of God's purposes towards mankind. Jesus Christ represents humanity. His subjection to the limitations of the flesh, His life on earth, His sufferings and death, represent that mysterious[1] "subjection" to "vanity" (that is, to transiency and corruption) which is the lot of mankind. When He rose from the dead, human nature rose too, inspired with "the Spirit of holiness," so as to lead a new life of righteousness in the Son of God.

iii If we are to see God's redeeming purpose in the actions of the pre-incarnate Son, St. Paul teaches us that we need to contemplate them in the light of the Incarnation. Taken by itself, the "fall" of man might seem to represent a lapse, or change of mind, in God; but, when regarded "in Christ," it is seen as a stage of evolution, a proof that God is working out of evil the highest good.

Apart from the resurrection of Jesus, sin and death appear as two overhanging precipices conspiring together to destroy those who would pass through the

[1] Rom. viii. 20.

narrow ravine below; but when the risen Saviour appears between their summits, they are revealed as the two sides of an arch, now at last completed by the intervening key-stone, and presenting a safe and covered way to those whom they were on the point of overwhelming.

§ 2

But, in order that we may accept "justification" or forgiveness, it is not enough that Christ's death and resurrection should strengthen our faith in God's overruling wisdom and power. We need also to trust in His pity and loving-kindness.

i It is essential to the completion of an act of forgiveness that the forgiven should believe that the forgiver really sympathizes with him. Even a child detects a parent assuming a serious face, and pretending to be grieved, or trying to feel really grieved, at some fault that has troubled the childish conscience. In such a case, the words of forgiveness may be pronounced, but the essence has vanished. Unreality on the one side has quenched faith on the other, and "without faith there can be no remission of sins."

So it is between men and men, and between men and God. We cannot believe in a forgiving Father in heaven unless we realize that He Himself suffers something corresponding to the "passion" of the Son on earth, so that we may say, in a sense, even of the Supreme, "In all our afflictions he was afflicted."

ii What has been said above must be here repeated, that God is not primarily to be regarded by us (not at least at present and not so as to overshadow His other attributes) as "omnipotent," but rather as preparing the way for a time when we shall be able to feel, and in sincerity to say, that He is "omnipotent." His "kingdom" has *not* "come." In the end we shall see that He has been "omnipotent": but for the present we are to regard Him as merely doing the best possible; as the "potter", who can mould the clay for the purpose for which the clay is fittest, but who cannot alter the clay. Whether we call the seemingly opposing element "the nature of the clay," or a "resistance," or an "adversary," the Father is revealed as overcoming it through the Son by long-suffering, patience, conformity to a gradual development of order and harmony, by endurance of physical disorder, by sympathy with moral disease, by participation in human agony.

How the Father can be at once all-powerful and "long-suffering" we do not know. Both are articles of faith; but the latter is infinitely the more important. The Bible repeatedly asserts it. Our hearts and consciences require it. For if the Father suffers nothing at all when He sends the Son to bear infinite suffering, what a mockery to say "God *so loved* the world that he sent his only-begotten Son"! Where is the "love"? It is a bad thing to deify well-meaning weakness and unwise affection: but it is inexpressibly worse, it is absolute self-damnation, to place upon the throne of heaven an omniscient Hypocrite, an Almighty Pharisee.

§ 3

A really sincere, deep, and deliberate recognition of the sympathy of the Supreme God with man wil revolutionize our notions of what is truly divine, and will remove barriers that prevent some, who are willing to believe, from entering into the benefits of Christ's atonement.

i As long as we imagine that Christ, in order to be divine, must have known everything beforehand, and that He had all the details of His future triumph written in His mind before He entered the olive-groves of Gethsemane, and that He retained them while hanging on the Cross—so long we may look on the Crucified and remain ungrateful. For we have converted Christ's suffering from a reality into a mere seeming: we have become a sect of "seemers" or "make-believes"—in other words, modern "Docetae."

ii But when we are once penetrated with the thought that suffering for others is a divine act, and that the Father Himself suffers for our sakes something corresponding to human suffering, our hearts are forthwith opened to an infinitely higher conception both of the humanity and of the essential divinity of Christ. "He was a real man," we say: "He did not *know* what was to happen, but only *believed*: He had a struggle of faith, as we have. His pain on the Cross was not merely, nor mainly, physical, but such as is felt by the noblest and purest of the helpers and reformers of

mankind in the noblest and purest part of their nature—a heart wounded by the insults of those who knew Him not, still more by the desertion of those who knew and loved Him, and most of all by the treachery of one who had once, perhaps, come near loving Him, and whom He had hoped to win to Himself; a dreary sense of the general unworthiness of all those for whom He was dying; a recollection of past failure and a whisper of uncertainty as to the immediate results of His uncompleted work; an unwonted thirst and yearning for the divine presence, not now satisfied, as of old, by full and perfect communion with the Father in heaven; possibly, too, a transitory cloud arising from a suggestion of abandonment, not only on earth, but in heaven."

iii Towards such a man, would it be wonderful if our souls went forth in something stronger than gratitude? Suppose, for a moment, that a supreme god of the universe—with whom Jesus fondly supposed that He was at one, and whom He with misplaced affection called a father—allowed Jesus to be deluded and to delude us as well; and this with a total and absolute spiritual delusion, so that the gospel was, from beginning to end, a falsehood, with nothing corresponding to its promises, no Father in heaven, no forgiveness of sins, no hope of resurrection after death, no meeting of souls hereafter, no righting of wrongs in a final judgment, no future good to compensate present ill:—would not the nobler part of the human race, and the nobler part of every individual in it, be moved to go over to the side of that deluded Jesus, and to worship Him rather than this supreme permitter of delusions;

on the slender hope, perhaps, that the latter might be somehow hereafter dethroned from his supremacy, and that what he had made our brains and reasons recognize as indubitably false might, after all, prove true; or else, even with no hope at all, going to the endless silence of inevitable death with the certainty that the supreme deluder was logically right, but with the single consolation in this span's breadth of life that we would reserve our homage not for the deceiver but for the Deceived, not for the strong but for the Weak, not for the god but for the Man?

§ 4

But we are spared the necessity of so desperate a faith. The phenomena of the Resurrection combine with the teaching of Evolution, the history of human nature, and the results of personal experience, to convince us that this suffering and dying Christ truly represents for us one of the two highest aspects—perhaps we should say, the highest of all the aspects—of the all-controlling Will.

i There is the exultant faith in spiritual conquests, and that is great. But there is also the half-tremulous trust in the power of spiritual suffering, and that—at least for us, at present—seems greater. The one is faith in the Ascension; the other, in the Cross. The two together make up that feeling by which, as with a stretched-out hand, we accept God's priceless gift of "forgiveness"; or we may call it the ear that receives His verdict of "justification"; or we may say that by

it we take Christ into ourselves, or are carried by Christ out of ourselves into Himself. All are metaphors, but all express solid spiritual fact, in comparison with which this visible earth is an unsubstantial shadow.

ii Perhaps it is wrong to say that one of these two elements in faith is greater than the other, or to try to compare or divide what God has joined together. One is faith in God's Light, the other is faith in God's Darkness; and, in our human world, the former cannot exist without the latter: "the light shineth in darkness." How blessed a gift is faith in Darkness, when we once feel that it is God's Darkness, so that even there His hand will lead us and His right hand will hold us: "If I say, peradventure the darkness will cover me, then shall my night be turned into day. Yea, the darkness is no darkness with thee, but the night is as clear as the day: the darkness and light to thee are both alike."

2 *Man's Forgiveness*

§ 1

Faith, then, in the sacrifice of Christ corresponds to that faith in the knowledge, sympathy, and sincerity of a forgiver which common experience shews us to be essential for the reception of forgiveness received by man from man.

i When we speak of such vast spiritual transactions as the Atonement, a feeling that seems like awe bids us put afar off all "common-place" illustrations and

"petty" analogies. But real awe does not use the words "common-place" or "petty," but only "true" or "false," when investigating truth. It is as though a reverence for the glory of the sun should bid us shrink from taking its altitude with the shadow of a foot-rule, insisting that nothing under the height of the Andes must serve our purpose. That would be irreverent to the laws of Nature, which bid us study the greatest in the least. Indeed, the least is often the best: the smaller is often the more intelligible; the more homely, the more universal; the more human, the more divine.

ii Let us take, then, a very common-place instance indeed, drawn from commercial life, that of an old and hitherto honest servant, crushed down by the loss of self-respect consequent on some breach of trust. He may feel it impossible to accept *real* forgiveness (even accompanied with remission of all penalty) from his master's son who, knowing nothing of his past career, nothing of his present humiliation, passes over the offence as a trifle, or else ignores it because the man's services are too valuable to be dispensed with.

Here, the defect is on the part of the "quasi-forgiver." He is no real forgiver, only a remitter of penalty. But the result is a loss for the "quasi-forgiven." He is not really forgiven, for he has no faith; and he has no faith because there is nothing to have faith in. He cannot believe in the knowledge and sympathy of the forgiver, for they do not exist.

iii But suppose the sympathy and sincerity do exist. Still, the servant cannot be forgiven if faith is swallowed

up in doubts and suspicions: "He will not prosecute or dismiss me because I am too useful to him, but he does not really sympathize with me. He does not understand my feelings. All he feels is that he has been inconvenienced and that it is an unpleasant business, and he will be glad to get me out of the room and to say no more about it":—such suspicions as these, even though baseless, make the reception of forgiveness impossible by paralysing the faculty that should receive it.

iv Or, again, suppose the servant has faith in the sympathy and sincerity of his young master but not in his knowledge. Then, once more, the forgiveness, genuine though it may be on the part of the forgiver, may have little effect on the forgiven: "The young man means well; he is kind and sympathetic, but he does not know me or the world. Once a knave, always a knave. I shall never feel sure of myself again, nor will he ever feel sure of me. I shall go down to the grave with my burden, and he cannot lighten it."

v But a man of spiritual insight and sympathy, especially when aided by the experience of mature age, may well be conceived as exercising a sort of magnetic power over an offender who, though distrusting himself, finds himself thus addressed by one in whose sincerity and knowledge of human nature he places great trust: "My friend, I have had long experience of such matters, and I know your condition better than you know it yourself. I shall treat you just as before, for I am certain

that you will never thus offend again." In such a case, an offender may learn to trust in himself by trusting in another: he trusts, as it were, to his better self in the mind of the forgiver.

vi In the forgiven, faith may be described, not only as the hand by which the soul of the forgiven clasps that of the forgiver so as to be drawn upward, but also as the eye by which the forgiven sees what the forgiver has to reveal of the mercy and power of God. Man does not give a gift *because* the recipient has a hand but *by means of* the hand. God does not give us light *because* we have eyes but *by means of* our eyes. So it is with the gift of forgiveness. We receive it *by means of* faith, not *because of* faith. St. Paul says "*through* faith": but "through" does not mean "because of," but "by means of."

It appears, then, from this analysis, that there is nothing of the nature of a bargain between the forgiver and the forgiven. The former offers a free gift, and the only condition for acceptance is the willingness and ability of the latter to accept it. Possibly some outward act on the part of the offender may be necessary as a token that he is really willing and able: but, if so, it is a "token," not a price. The "quality" of man's forgiveness, as of God's, must not be "strained." It must come spontaneously or not at all. If a "price" is paid, pure forgiveness vanishes.

3 The Likeness of God's Forgiveness to Man's Forgiveness

§ 1

The results of our faith in Christ vary with the quantity and quality of it. An intense faith, though qualified by superstition, may be far more morally efficacious than a faith that is reasonable but weak.

i There are some, for example, who believe in Christ's goodness and humanity, but disbelieve that in any sense, even spiritual, He rose from the dead.

Their belief is morally and intellectually better than that of one who looks on Christ as simply a god who went through the form of being man. But they are liable to sore trouble and perturbation of faith. For it can hardly be but that sometimes, and especially in those moments when they are in most need of help, they will be tempted to think, either that He was but one of many leaders, such as Socrates, Gautama, and Mohammed, or even that He may have been a fanatic, because He was not justified by results; and this leads logically to a profound distrust in the governing Power of the Universe; and such a distrust tends to general faithlessness, hopelessness, and (with most people, not all) to self-absorption in their own miseries, or to seeking refuge in a life of distractions and pleasurable excitements.

ii Others, while believing in the tangible and material resurrection, yet realize the sufferings of Christ as merely physical, and regard Him as consciously going through a form of what is called "vicarious sacrifice," by which, in consideration of Christ's pain, God remitted the penalty due from the human race. These, if they were as immoral as their views, would be blind to the goodness of God, while extolling His power.

But many, who theoretically believe this, are much better than their "views." They do not argue, but feel: "I cannot explain how God can be just, according to our notions of justice. Yet this I know, God sent His Son to die for me. Therefore He must love me." This strong and precious sense of God's love is very helpful in some of nobler nature. But others, accepting more easily such views as virtually demonstrate God's injustice, are encouraged to "continue in sin," deeming themselves His favourites. Even in the noblest, such theories becloud the clearness of their conceptions of God; and, as they grow older, they sometimes find themselves confronted by a fixed and solid doubt that altogether eclipses faith.

§ 2

But if any can so combine faith in Jesus upon the Cross with faith in the risen Saviour as to believe that the relation between the Father and the Son represents neither collusion nor collision between *two* gods but an aspect or character of the *One* Supreme, these can discern in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, a

summary of all God's past and future government and guidance of things; and then they can take comfort for humanity, as being, in the mass, and ultimately, to be conformed to God.

Besides this, they can take comfort individually for themselves. Frequently by slow degrees, but sometimes in an instantaneous flash, there is borne in on the soul that contemplates Christ's Cross the sense (quite apart from any feeling of merit in ourselves, and very often with a crushing sense of demerit) that such an infinitude of divine love must be accompanied with a divine knowledge too; that the "life-giving Spirit" of Christ around us and in us knows us better than we know ourselves, and will not abandon us for all our faults and failings as long as we will not abandon Him; and that, though we can do nothing adequate to prove our gratitude, and though, even in our poor attempts to prove it in this way or in that, we shall mostly make a miserable failure, yet—chastise us as He may, now and hereafter—the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ must still be our Father and we His children.

§ 3

Whenever our souls receive this revelation, we are at once transported out of the bondage of constraint and "Law," into the circle of the Divine Family, into the atmosphere of "grace," good-will, favour, love, peace.

It is in that moment that there comes to us what St. Paul calls "justification," or "pronouncing righteous," through faith.

i There was a saying in the Septuagint version of the Law,[1] "Thou shalt *not pronounce righteous* the ungodly for a reward." This St. Paul appears to have had in mind when he speaks[2] of Abraham as "believing" on Him that "*pronounceth* the ungodly *righteous.*"

A paradox, but a truth embodied in many familiar proverbs and recognized as a truism even by men of the world—that every righteous man can, in some small degree, make another "righteous" by "pronouncing" him "righteous"! As a spark to the sun, so is this power in us to the same power in God. Still we know it to be a power, even in ourselves. How much more may we reasonably believe that it is a power in God!

ii "Righteous" we never can be in this life, in the sense of doing, saying, and thinking everything that the ideal man, or even our own perfected self, ought to do, say, and think. But, if we have been carried by the Spirit of Christ out of ourselves into the Father, the voice of the All-seeing and All-hearing "*pronouncing* us *righteous*" has created in us what it "pronounces," that is to say, "righteousness" of heart and motive.

As in the visible, so in the invisible world, God says, "Let there be Light," and there is Light.

The "forgiveness of sins," or "justification through faith," is, in effect, a new creation. Perhaps we ought to call it "*the* creation." The breath that was "breathed" through the pre-incarnate Word into "the

[1] Exod. xxiii. 7. [2] Rom. iv. 5.

dust of the earth" made the first Man, the "living soul." But that was only a transient type of the second[1] "breathing," the creative act of the risen Saviour, wherein the same Word, having become incarnate as the second Man, taking the "living soul" instead of the "dust," moulded it into a new existence within Himself, evolving from the "living soul" the "life-giving spirit."

§ 4

Some have complained that "breathing" and "evolution" represent distinct facts. "We can understand," say they, "the Christian view that the spirit is breathed *into* the soul, and also the materialistic view that what men are pleased to call their spirit is evolved *out of* what they are pleased to call their soul. But these two metaphors must not be mixed."

This is a very common way of speaking among those (the vast majority of mankind) who do not understand what a metaphor is. All metaphors, if taken literally, are false. Almost all men are in danger, at times, of taking them as literally true. Against this danger few remedies are better than to place side by side (a very different thing from mixing) two quite distinct and (if possible) incompatible metaphors; as, for example, when we say that we are in Christ, and yet Christ is in us. So here. God neither "evolves" literally, nor "breathes" literally; but He does something that may be illustrated by both "evolving" and "breathing."

The sculptor "evolves" a man out of a block of

[1] John xx. 22.

marble. But he first had the man, that is to say, the image or idea of the man, in his mind. So we may say he "injected," or "inspired," or "in-breathed," or "put"—the word matters little, provided we are not a slave to it—his idea of the man into the marble. There was no literal "evolving" or "unrolling," no literal "inspiring." Literally, there was nothing but "chipping." But to say "chipping" would be to convey a real falsehood beneath a literal truth. The stone-mason chips. The sculptor "inspires," or "evolves."

God is a sculptor, differing from human sculptors in this, among other things, that (so we are led to believe) He is in His tools and His tools in Him. All the more does it seem true to say that whatsoever person or thing has been shaped by Him, has not only felt the touch of His hand, but has also received the impress of His thought, the inspiration of His Spirit. The stone, the leaf, the sentient animal, the intellectual mind, the life-giving spirit,—all have been "evolved," all have been "inspired." To each the Spirit of God has conveyed the law of its being, the faculty of fulfilling its ideal.

CHAPTER VII

DIVINE RETRIBUTION

1 Christ's doctrine

§ 1

It can hardly be denied that the sayings of Jesus about the future of "the many" sound less hopeful than those of St. Paul. The Messiah seems to have given His first thoughts to His countrymen, the lineal descendants of Abraham; the Apostle, to his adopted brethren, the spiritual descendants of the father of the faithful. The former sees, in the foreground, the general rejection of the Gospel by the Jews, and the consequent exclusion of "the many"; the Apostle, having passed further on to what lay behind, is filled with exultation at the manifest tokens of a general acceptance of the Gospel by the Gentiles, and of the consequent inclusion of "the many." St. Matthew's Gospel sadly reminds us that "many are called but few are chosen"; the Epistles bid us again and again rejoice because "whom he called, them he also justified," and because the grace of God has been made to "abound unto *the many*."

§ 2

How stern and unsparing is Christ's condemnation, and how hopeless seems His forecast of the fate, of those Scribes and Pharisees whom He calls "serpents" and a "generation of vipers," seemingly doomed to "the damnation of hell"! Nor was this an isolated expression. He elsewhere speaks of "sin against the Holy Spirit" as a sin that[1] "shall not be forgiven"; or[2] "shall not be forgiven in this age (i.e. aeon) or the next"; or of the man who has thus sinned as one who[3] "hath no forgiveness for ever, but shall be liable to eternal sin."

It was one of Christ's fundamental doctrines that "From him that hath not, shall be taken even that which he hath"—apparently an acknowledgment that life may result in actual loss, spiritual retrogression. Accordingly, He says concerning the traitor Judas, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born."

It is true that the earlier parables speak of the "tares," and "the fish that are cast back into the sea," and the "seed" that is "trampled down" or "choked by weeds," as exceptional. But one or two of the later parables in St. Matthew warn us expressly that "Many are called but few are chosen," and others imply it, as a kind of melancholy refrain, suggesting that few will ultimately find salvation.

Against all this, it is idle to allege from the Old Testament that Jehovah "will not keep his anger for

[1] Luke xii. 10. [2] Matth. xii. 32.

[3] Mark iii. 29. The literal translation is "hath no forgiveness for the *aeon*, but shall be liable to *aeonian* sin:" see below, 3, § 2.

ever," or from the New Testament that God "will freely give us all things," and other similar sayings.

This is not fit language for those who sincerely seek the truth. Surely they must be aware that common sense, and the context of these quotations, combine to contradict the universal meaning they would attach to them, and that against every tender saying of the Old Testament it would be easy to set a stern one. Moreover, in the New Testament, "*us*" means, not "the many," nor "the world," but "us *believers*," "us *the elect*." In the Johannine Epistles, "the *world*" "lieth in darkness" and must "perish" unless it "believes."

2 *St. Paul's doctrine*

§ 1

St. Paul's doctrine subordinates, rather than contradicts, the darker aspect above presented.

He does not ignore the "casting away" of Israel; but he sees it subordinated to the "bringing in" of the Gentiles. He recognizes the "many transgressions" that followed the fall of the first Adam; but he beholds them swallowed up in the "righteousness" of the second Adam. He faces the terrible conflict between "the law of death and sin" and "the law of God" in the heart of every man, but he overcomes its terror in the thought of the resurrection and the present predominance of Christ, which two facts so forcibly impress him, as representing the outcome of the

evolution of all time, that he accepts them as loosing, or perhaps we should say, cutting, the knot of the problem of evil.

§ 2

"What is to be the fate of those who sinned from Adam to Moses? What is in store for those in Israel who sinned (as who did not sin?) under the Law before the Incarnation? What judgment awaits the Jews, in the days of Jesus, who saw and rejected Him, never having heard the Gospel of His resurrection? Moreover afterwards, was not the Gospel a savour of death unto death for those who rejected it, as well as of life unto life for those who accepted it? Did not Satan blind the hearts of many? Was there not a veil on the 'Israel' of the first century hiding the truth from them? How can an omnipotent God punish the children of men, whom He created, for sinning in accordance with His foreknowledge? How can God's creatures resist God's will? If their hearts were hard, did not *He* harden them?"

To all these objections the Apostle, if he replies, replies, not with logic, but, in effect, with rebuke: "The potter knows his trade. So does God. He may be trusted to have done the best possible with the clay. *Who art thou that repliest against God?*" And then he breaks out into adoration of "the depth of the riches and the wisdom of God."

3 What are we to believe?

§ 1

The subject of future punishment is so full of difficulty and so fraught with possibilities of horror that some might naturally deprecate any discussion of it by the orthodox, on the ground that hardly any believer can bring himself to face it frankly, impartially, and with a dispassionate desire to approximate to the truth: "How can we be dispassionate when our own eternal interests and those of our friends are at stake? As well expect prisoners in the dock to be impartial in judging and sentencing, or acquitting, themselves! What the Book says, we must take as a whole, or reject as a whole, and must be content, either to know that, or to know nothing. Man, on his trial, cannot be allowed to select from the statute-book what tells for him, and to reject what tells against him. And, except the Book, there are no means of knowing, or conjecturing, the statutes of the unseen world."

i Such an argument begs more questions than one. It assumes that Christians are "prisoners in the dock," that is to say, occupying a position inferior even to that of those who[1] "before faith came, were kept in ward under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed." But we claim to be children

[1] Gal. iii. 23.

of God, free in the freedom and grace of Christ, free to lift up our eyes to God and look Him in the face, saying, "Shall not the Father of the spirits of all flesh do right?"

ii We do not accept the dictum that the Book must be taken, or left, as a whole. We say that the Book, though a revelation, reveals, like all present revelations, "through a mirror, darkly." It resembles the Book of Nature in being full of illusions; and it is the duty of each generation to find out in it a new truth here and reject in it a falsehood there, gradually ascending through the illusions of the Book to the truth of the Being whom the Book is to reveal.

iii To say that, except the Book, there are no means of knowing the will of God in the future, appears—at least in those who believe man to be made in God's image, and Christ's Church to be taught by God's Spirit, and who have fully weighed the consequences of their belief—to be little short of profanity. To us God seems to be giving daily new knowledge of Himself through the best developments of human nature, and especially among those nations that have attempted to work out Christ's principles.

iv So far, and so far alone, do we agree with our objector—that a Christian is not "to select from the Bible what tells for him and to reject what tells against him." But he may, and must, "select what tells for *righteousness* and reject what tells against *righteousness*."

By this, of course, we do not mean that a Biblical narrative with a good moral is to be accepted as historically true, while one with an apparently bad moral is to be rejected as historically false. What is meant, is, that "what tells for righteousness" must be regarded as spiritually true, and "what tells against righteousness" as spiritually false.

§ 2

Approaching in this spirit the comparison between the Synoptic and the Pauline doctrines, we have to bear in mind, in the first place, that both are set forth with a brevity of expression, an abundance of metaphor, and a frequency of allusion, which should deter us from hastily inferring systems of purgatory, hell, or heaven. Moreover, both doctrines appear to look forward to a speedy establishment of the Kingdom of God, which would introduce a new "age," "world," or "aeon." This has an important bearing on many passages referring to the next world or aeon. When, for example, the punishment in store for evil-doers is described as "aeonian" fire, or fire in Gehenna (that is, the valley of Hinnom, where "the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched"), such expressions by no means necessitate the meaning of "eternal" in the modern sense. To express that, writers resort, at all events occasionally, to stronger phrases. For example, they describe the glory of God as enduring "for *all aeons*," or "for the *aeons of aeons*."

i Our Lord's stern utterances of retribution are neither to be softened nor narrowed in their meaning, so far as

spiritual principle is concerned. It is a law of human nature that "he that hath not" must lose "even that which he hath." We know from experience that "many are called but few are chosen"—chosen, at least, to attain in this life that high ideal which the Spirit of Christ holds up to all Christians. Nay, there are states, perhaps, of sensual degradation (as well as of that moral malignity which Christ specially attacked) concerning which we must say, "Neither in this age, nor in the age to come, will they find remission." In any future "age," "aeon," or "world," that is to be just, there must needs be much "casting into outer darkness," much "weeping," much "wailing and gnashing of teeth."

ii But the question of time is altogether different from the question of principle. There is no reason to suppose that "this age," or "the age to come," will be the final ages: and there is great reason—reason as infinite as the love of God in Christ's Cross and as the power of God in Christ's resurrection—for supposing that the "darkness," the "weeping," the "wailing and gnashing of teeth," will all serve some divine purpose.

Take, for example, what some may call the severest of all the parables, one in which we can by no means be certain that we have the exact words of Jesus—the story of Lazarus and Dives. Poor Dives in hell, lifting up his eyes "in anguish" and thinking affectionately of his brothers, was far better off morally and spiritually than Dives in his comfortable mansion, clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, and taking no thought at all for Lazarus at his gate.

Dives was in hell, but it was God's hell. The Spirit of God had not utterly abandoned him.

iii Is it not possible to accept Christ's teaching as to individual responsibility, inevitable retribution, and the difficulty of attaining to the inner circle about the divine throne, and yet to hold fast St. Paul's teaching as to the wisdom and mercy and power of the divine scheme of redemptive evolution?

And is it irreverent to say that the Master may have assigned to the disciple the higher and nobler doctrine, in accordance with the words,[1] "*Greater works than these shall he do*, because I go unto the Father"? The work of Jesus on earth was to conquer the adversary. It was reserved for the rescued Apostle to follow up the victory. Jesus prayed that the cup might pass from Him: St. Paul, by Christ's Spirit, had been taught the meaning and necessity of "the cup." Jesus marvelled at the unbelief of His countrymen: St. Paul saw in the unbelief of Israel a result foreknown by God and subordinated to the spread of a faith that would regenerate the world.

§ 3

St. Paul speaks of Israel as an olive tree[2] from which branches have been broken off that the branch from the wild olive, that is, the Gentile world, might be grafted in: and he proceeds to say that "God is able to graft them in again," so that, in the end, "all Israel shall be saved."

[1] John xiv. 12. [2] Rom. xi. 17–26.

i This obviously represents a different conception of the "saving" of a nation from that which would be formed by modern minds. The dying of tens of thousands of unconverted Jews, since the time of the Crucifixion, does not seem to the Apostle incompatible with the salvation of "all Israel." Such a mode of speech appears to have come down from the Prophets and the Psalms, where Israel is described as the Vine of the Lord. This branch, or that, may be plucked off: but while the tree, as a whole, flourishes, Israel is "saved." A similar image occurs in the fourth Gospel, where our Lord is represented as describing Himself as the Vine, and the disciples as the branches.

ii This suggests to us that, as the Apostle's view of a nation's identity differs from ours, so, perhaps, may his view, and the Synoptic view, of a person's individuality; which, indeed, may be a far more subtle and complex entity than we suppose. We can but conjecture about it: but conjectures may be useful, if, while not loosening our firm hold of fact, they tend to make us modest in the interpretation of fact.

Human life is made up of several phases of existence, the ante-natal state, babyhood, infancy, childhood, youth, manhood, middle age, old age, and, sometimes, second childhood. Of the fourth of these phases we retain little memory; of the three earliest, absolutely none. Yet some of the conditions of our life were determined, to a large extent, in the earliest of all.

iii Our belief is that, beyond the grave, in Christ, all these phases of existence will be found summed up,

photographed, as it were, one upon the other, on the world of reality, resulting in a personality of which God takes cognizance. But then, if in this ultimate summary we include the later part of childhood, how can we altogether exclude the earlier? and if we include the earlier, how exclude infancy? and if we include infancy, how can we logically exclude ante-natality? Where precisely is the line to be drawn at which personality begins?

Yet, if we include these three earliest states, of which we are now as absolutely ignorant as though we were dead to them, how do we know that there may not be other states of pre-existence to which we have died, and of which we are ignorant because we have died to them, but which may be part of our characters, none the less?

iv As has been said above,[1] it is one thing to maintain that the doctrine of pre-existence *is* true, and quite another thing to point out to those who object to the New Testament teaching about a future life that some doctrine of this kind *may be* true, and that, if true, it may meet many of their objections. Nor does it seem *a priori* unreasonable for those who believe in the pre-existence of the incarnate Son, to hold the same belief about those whom He calls brethren.

It was urged above that a belief of this nature may be found no more incompatible with the sense of free will and responsibility than belief in heredity, and that a passage in the fourth Gospel is difficult

to interpret except on the supposition that Christ's disciples assumed something of the kind and were not rebuked by their Master for the assumption. To those considerations we may add another passage from the New Testament[1] in which our Lord pronounces that for a man who commits a certain sin it would have been "better not to have been born."

Once grant the possibility of the pre-existence of the human soul before its birth into this world, and then we can understand how one of our lives may be a period of retrogression, and yet there may be hope for us in the end. Just as a single wave that may fall back from the sand-mark of the wave before it, does not denote that the tide is going down, so one life of retrogression may not prove that the soul is doomed to retrograde for ever. Confining our view to that single life, we may say, "Better had it been for that man if he had never been born": and this would be perfectly true. Yet, in the end, that single life, contemplated as one of many, may be seen to be like "the fall of Adam," subordinated by God to the introduction of a higher righteousness.

v The admission of the possibility of a retrogressive life may perhaps be alleged to be inconsistent with the faith in God's goodness. But have not all of us our retrogressive stages? And do they not sometimes end in good? Does it never happen that a weak good man becomes less conscious of his weakness, or a strong good man becomes too conscious of his strength, in resisting evil, with the result that either finds himself com-

[1] Mark xiv. 21.

mitting some astounding sin, which opens his eyes and prepares the way for a complete reaction towards health and righteousness? And if there may be retrogressive stages in a life, why not retrogressive lives in the vital series that is to issue in a real "character," i.e. in something that is to be a thought of God, stamped upon the world of reality?

§ 4

So far we may safely go in speculative harmonizing. But we ought to deprecate much speculation on such mysteries as these. Such labyrinths touch upon the province of "the learning of the Egyptians," concerning which it is better to profess ourselves agnostics.

i There is one point, however, on which we cannot righteously be agnostics. In old times, when torture was commonly inflicted on prisoners and suspected persons, it was possible to believe that God might "torture":—"Why might He not do what Christian rulers and prelates did or sanctioned?"

But it is not possible to believe this now without degrading our conception of God. We ought to believe —with so strong a faith that we may popularly say we "know"—that God cannot inflict any punishment that is not beneficial both for the sufferer and for all.

"Beneficial," of course, must be used in a very different sense from "indulgent," and with a full recognition of the awful nature of evil, for which the greatest "benefit" must be to be destroyed,

—whether by change of nature, or by annihilation—in any case, to be destroyed.

Thus defined, the belief in the "beneficence" of God's judgments is surely not too benevolent for Christianity. It does not rise above the Platonic standard of divine "justice," that is, "giving to all that which is best for all." Nor do we deny that it may be a part of the training of some to contemplate the punishment of others. Into detailed denials of this kind we do not enter; the one thing we are bound to deny is that God's justice is dissimilar, or inferior, to the highest conception of human justice.

ii The following objections are sometimes brought against the belief in the possibility of corrective punishment after death.

It is urged that (1) "God cannot unmake our characters"; that (2) "all regeneration presupposes the germ of good left in the nature to be regenerated"; that (3) "a man may have cast away his will and power to desire God"; that (4) "he may have brought on himself a moral paralysis."

All these metaphorical statements are easily met. The first is false. The others are not to the point when brought against a belief that evil is to be destroyed but not "tortured": for what avails it to torture a being in whom is "no germ of good," or who has "cast away desire of God," or who is hopelessly "paralysed" for well-doing?

But we may also reply that (1) God does much daily towards "making" and "unmaking" our "characters": the question is one of degree, *How* much may He do?

St. Paul, in saying that "both to will and to do" come to us from Him, implies that He may do a great deal. (2) Who knows that "the germ" is *not* left? Seeds are latent for centuries, but still "left." (3) We all daily "cast away" *some* of our "will and power to desire God": the question is, again, How much? (4) Physical paralysis may be cured, being, indeed, one of the special diseases that Jesus is recorded as having cured: and why not moral paralysis?

It is strange that the first of these objections—practically amounting to an assertion that God "cannot" do that which, morally speaking, we should say He ought to do—is urged by men who believe that Jesus of Nazareth asserted that "with God all things are possible": where, in the light of the context, His meaning stands out clear and firm, namely, that, in the spiritual world, man's limitations of space and time disappear, so that the Father recognizes nothing to be impossible except that which is unjust.

CHAPTER VIII

ST. PAUL AND MODERN THOUGHT

1 St. Paul does not teach egotism

§ 1

St. Paul's theology is sometimes said to tend to egotism, if not to immorality, because he makes man the centre of the world, and man's feelings the centre of a man.

But does he do this? In his Epistles, is not man always a "member" in a "body"? Are not Israel and the Gentile world "branches" in a "tree"? Is not the Apostle's mind fixed on evolution as a whole; and on righteousness, or the glory of God, as the aim and end?

§ 2

St. Paul teaches, indeed, that "All things work together for good to them that love God." But why? Because "all things" that are real are based on the laws of God, so that those who love God and are in harmony with Him, are in harmony with "all things."

They work together with "all things" and consequently "all things" work together with them.

Here he agrees with Socrates, who declared that Anytus might cause him to drink hemlock, but that neither Anytus nor hemlock could "hurt" him. So, too, Epictetus; and so Christ Himself: "Some of you shall they put to death but . . . not a hair of your head shall be *harmed*."

"But this," some may say, "confirms our belief that Christian or Pauline doctrine is egotistic. It is too high, or too low. A god may be above all fears; and a beast may be below most fears, except those that touch the immediate present. But man is bound to fear, in proportion to his forethought and sympathy with others. Socrates ought to have thought more of Xanthippe and his children. A man who is free from all fear and trouble purchases his freedom at the price of a spiritual selfishness. He is self-absorbed, or, in other words, egotistic."

Such an objection would certainly apply to the doctrine of Epictetus, who enjoins on us to hold fast, as the only possession that is really ours, the blessed gift of "imperturbableness"—so that a man must not allow himself to be troubled even by the sins of those who are nearest to him, much less by death, pain, and misery around him: but we have seen above that the Christian doctrine is quite different. Christ taught us by His example, that, while we ought never to be "anxious" about the future, we may be, and sometimes must be, "troubled." Accordingly, St. Paul says,[1] "Who is weak and I am not weak? Who is caused to stumble

[1] 2 Cor. xi. 29.

and I burn not?" He also describes himself as[1] "filling up that which is wanting in the sufferings of Christ": and what does this imply except that Christ's followers, like Christ Himself, must find peace through suffering for others?

§ 3

Altruism, rather than egotism, lies beneath all Pauline doctrine; but, deep down beneath both, lies what may be called a fundamental "Christism": "If any man is *in Christ*, he is a new creature; behold, all things are become new." Whenever St. Paul speaks of himself as achieving anything, he always means—whether he says it or not—"not I, but Christ that dwelleth in me." If he rejoices over his converts, he rejoices over them "in Christ," as "members of Christ's body." Both in himself and in others, he feels that it is always the Father who, through the Son, "worketh both to will and to do."

i But this "Christism," though it implies worship of a Person, does not imply belief in personal caprice, or disbelief in an unalterable law of righteousness, as regulating the affairs of men.

His intense feeling of the "constraining love" of Christ does not hinder the Apostle from recognizing in Him at the same time a manifestation of God's eternal purpose to conform man to His own image by fixed and foreordained laws, through the processes of nature and history, through knowledge and ignorance, through

[1] Col. i. 24.

life and death, election and rejection, righteousness and sin.

God, in one aspect, is regarded by him in the light in which Nature is regarded by the most uncompromising materialist, as keeping His predestined course straight onwards, so that what we regard as His lapses or afterthoughts, "the weakness of God" and "the foolishness of God," are really stronger and wiser than the strength and wisdom of men. Throughout the Epistles, He is always, and above all, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ: but He is also the one, unchangeable, just, wise, and mighty Evolver of all good, on the fulfilment of whose foreordinances depends the welfare of His children:[1] "I, the Lord, change not: therefore ye, O children of men, are not consumed."

ii Certainly, the Apostle is sometimes hard put to it when he tries to reconcile the letter of the Old Testament with his theory of beneficent evolution.

In effect, he does *not* reconcile them. The letter has to give way to what he conceives to be the spirit. Abraham's children are—as the Prophets had hinted and John the Baptist had plainly declared—*not* Abraham's children after the flesh, but simply those who followed Abraham in spirit by accepting that Messiah whom the Patriarch accepted in anticipation. Nationalities are not nationalities, but essences: "*We*," he practically bids the believing Gentiles say, "*we* are the true circumcision, *we* are the seed of Abraham."

"Mystical" this doctrine may fairly be called,

[1] Comp. Malachi iii. 6 "For I, the Lord, change not: therefore ye, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed."

but hardly egotistic in a Jew. Nor is it likely to make Gentiles egotists on the strength of their fresh privileges; since the latter are warned that, though they have been grafted into the cultivated olive tree in the place of Israel after the flesh, a time may yet come when the Gentile branch, in turn, if it becomes degenerate, will be broken off and the Israelite branch restored.

iii Finally, he tells us that "all Israel will be saved." This affords a climax to the instances that demonstrate the absolute freedom with which the Apostle ignores the literal interpretation of historical facts in order to give prominence to the underlying evolution of righteousness. Not that he ignores facts, but he ignores such inferences from them as would tend to faithlessness. The things that he does not know are, in his judgment, details that must be left in the hands of the All-righteous. The things that he does know are the vast outlines of spiritual revelation, such as, for example, the certainty that "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance," and that, in the end, and as a whole, the Chosen People "will be saved."

2 *His doctrine of Thankfulness*

§ 1

If we ask by what means the Apostle contrives to harmonize a recognition of the evil in the world with a

faith in a perfectly righteous God, the answer appears from previous considerations to be this, that he is so possessed by gratitude for Christ's grace that nothing seems to him too good to believe about Him whom Christ has revealed as the Father, nothing too difficult for Him to accomplish who raised Jesus from the dead.

i We hardly recognize, perhaps, in modern times, how much the influence of Christ's Spirit depends on the thankfulness of the heart in which it is to reside, and how the Spirit is "quenched" by the absence of this virtue, which St. Paul so repeatedly enjoins.

If a man accepts the Creed, has a general faith in God, and strives to do his duty, it seems to some of us, now, unreasonable to demand that he should do more, and particularly hard that he should be told to "rejoice always" and "in everything give thanks." We are tempted to call such language "high-flown." Sometimes we may think it even tends to hypocrisy. How can a man "rejoice," and "give thanks," when suffering from some depressing disease, or troubled by the sufferings or faults of those whom he loves? Is there not, we may ask, a time for all things, and, among others, a time for laying one's hand on one's mouth in sorrowful and speechless resignation, without pretence of thankfulness or rejoicing?

ii So natural a remonstrance demands consideration. Indeed, it must be admitted at once that there are occasions where thankfulness takes the shape of a vice, as when Pepys, during the plague of London, thanks God for his fine clothes and new carriage; or when the

Pharisee thanks God that he is not as the Publican. Many would be tempted to think parents unnatural if they could "give thanks" in the very moment of hearing bad tidings about their children. And what human being can feel "thankful" in the contemplation of evil-doing and oppression?

iii Yet, when we have given due weight to all these considerations, it remains true that we, in these days, have much to learn from the Apostle's teaching on this point.

St. Paul did not write without experience of many of the evils mentioned above as incompatible with the spirit of thankfulness. He loved his converts as children, and knew what it was to be neglected by them, nay, sometimes to be rejected owing to the allurements of rival teachers, and to see those whom he had "begotten in Christ" fall from Christ's grace.

How fervid a patriotism breathes in the Apostle's eulogy of the Israelites,[1] "whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises," and what a proportional pang must it have caused him to be cut off from country, friends, and kindred! What exile of Greece or Rome has ever framed words of lamentation keener than those which describe the anguish of this "Hebrew of Hebrews" at being severed from Israel[2]: "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and unceasing pain in my

[1] Rom. ix. 4. [2] Rom. ix. 1.

heart. For I could wish myself anathema from Christ for my brethren's sake, my kinsmen according to the flesh" ?

Living under Nero, St. Paul was surely not less accustomed than any nineteenth century Christian to "contemplate evil doing, and oppression," and the sensual vices at their worst, and this, too, not lurking in dark places, but usurping the seat of sovereignty. Nor was the contemplation that of a philosopher, seated on the hill of Truth and Peace, and looking down in distant sympathy on the affliction of his fellow creatures below. He was in the thick of the evil. His life was a series of persecutions, varied by the perils and hardships of a wanderer. Nor did disease spare him—so at least we infer from what he says of the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, which weakened him for the preaching of the Gospel, and which, notwithstanding, the Lord would not take away.

Summing up our notions of this complex character, we must be surely very complacent if we do not feel a little perplexed by it, a little doubtful about our ability to take its measure, a little diffident about the propriety of rejecting off-hand any spiritual truth that such a one persistently inculcates.

§ 2

We may find it easier to approximate to an intelligent sympathy with the Apostle if we contemplate his "thankfulness" as a militant virtue, akin to that feeling of grateful and loyal trust in a general which, in some armies, before now, has converted every common soldier into a hero.

i Such a virtue is compatible with (comparatively) superficial feelings of anger, vengeance, pain, perplexity, and trouble. The soldier is not "thankful" when his comrade drops by his side, when the line has to fall back, or when he realizes that his corpse must help to fill up the ditch over which his regiment is to pass to victory. But though "thankfulness" does not come to the surface at such moments, it is there, none the less, in the shape of a fundamental faith that his general has done, not only his best, but the best possible.

ii So it is with the Pauline "rejoicing" or "thanksgiving." It implies immunity, not from "trouble," but from that canker of selfish, fretful worry, which eats away the heart and deranges every faculty, physical, mental, and spiritual. Troubles we are to have, all of us; but, beneath the troubles, a foundation of settled peace: and for that we are to be "thankful." We are to leave both our individual destiny, and the plan of the campaign as a whole, in the hands of the General, confident of the ultimate victory, and thankful by anticipation.

In this sense, "thankfulness" is the opposite to "covetousness." The latter has been seen to be essentially "idolatry." The former is, in itself, a kind of adoration, the very salt of Christian life and worship. It is the spiritual version of the Tenth Commandment, which, for Christians, ought not to be negative alone, but also positive: "Thou shalt be thankful: for thankfulness to the Father through the Son is the fulfilment of the law."

iii It may be urged, and with some appearance of reason, that St. Paul's precepts of thankfulness are based on the fresh and vivid experiences of his readers, many of whom had recently passed—and that, often, with a conscious, sudden, and sometimes even instantaneous change—from the domination of the vilest sins into the grace of Christ, from moral darkness and death into moral light and life.

"For us, modern Christians," it may be said, "such experience, even if we are sincere believers, must necessarily be far less striking; and, consequently, expressions of gratitude that might be appropriate for the first century would be inappropriate, unnatural, and therefore hypocritical, in the nineteenth and twentieth.

"Moreover, we have causes of depression that St. Paul had not: internal divisions and disorders in Christendom, narrow bigotry or mediæval superstitions in some Churches, lukewarmness in almost all; and, in every Christian country, a large and educated class, once Christian, that has now placed itself, or seems to be on the point of placing itself, outside the pale of any Church, outside the body of Christ."

iv There is truth in this, but not so much as there seems at first sight. The Apostle certainly does dwell with a natural gratitude on the profound peace that springs from being "declared righteous" by God. But he also often asserts (and everywhere implies) that neither he nor any follower of Christ has yet "attained" that which must be attained: he is ever "forgetting those things that are behind and pressing on to those

things that are before." Nowhere can he be described as satisfied with himself. Nay, on one occasion he speaks[1] of labouring lest in the end he himself should be rejected. As for "internal divisions and disorders," who can read St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians and Galatians without perceiving that such perplexing evils existed from the first, and in so violent a form as to make it, humanly speaking, doubtful whether the Churches of Greece and Asia would not lapse into Paganism or Judaism again, so that infant Christendom would be stifled in its cradle? The modern Churches have their defects, but none, in our days, have gone the length of tolerating even for a moment what many in the Church of Corinth were disposed to tolerate, "that a man should have his father's wife."

§ 3

The fact is, that St. Paul's thankfulness is not based solely on the external successes of the gospel nor solely on his own peace of mind and change of heart, but on the conviction—derived from the contemplation of all things that are, the microcosm within, and the macrocosm without—that, whatever may become of himself and his converts, the destiny of the world is fixed, and its path unalterably marked out towards the fulfilment of God's will, that is to say, universal righteousness.

Now, to suppose that Christian Churches in modern times can give up thankfulness in this sense, is much the same as to maintain that an army can give up trust in its general. So it can. But, if it does, the army is ruined.

[1] 1 Cor. ix. 27.

i Is not the explanation of the thanklessness of modern Christians largely due to the fact that, until lately, many of the Churches have too much neglected that aggressive work which must bind every Christian community together? A regiment in a garrison town is proverbially liable to slackness of discipline. A campaign brings it back into shape. Is it not the same with Christian Churches? And is it not generally true that those Christians are most prone to thanklessness who have taken least part in Christian warfare?

ii Nevertheless, as some soldiers must be in garrison, so must some Christians. It devolves sometimes on generations, or even centuries, as well as on individuals, to "stand and wait." Milton has taught us that such "waiting" may be true "service," but nothing will ever make it equally conducive to discipline with active warfare. How, during such periods of comparative inactivity, can trust in the Spirit of Christ's army be kept alive?

In the military service, one means of doing this is found in the traditions connected with the colours of each regiment. But the memory of the successes of the national arms collectively is a still more powerful influence. Similarly, it is necessary for the Churches to study and give thanks for the ancient and modern successes of the armies of Christ, the Apostles, martyrs, and saints in all ages. But we have other causes for thankfulness that must be borne in mind—and all the more because they are not touched on in the Pauline Epistles. It was beside St Paul's purpose to enforce thankfulness for political freedom, for

music, literature, science, or even for social or domestic blessings. How could it be otherwise in one who discouraged marriage because of "the present distress" and because of the expectation of the speedy "coming of the Lord?"

iii It remains for Christian teachers in our days to supplement the doctrine of St. Paul by applying its principles to modern life with the aid of the additional revelations conveyed to us by the Word of God speaking to us through art and science, through the history of nations and of Churches, through discoveries of new continents, races, and religions, through the teaching of political and social economy, through the literature of imagination, through every phenomenon or suggestion that helps us to new knowledge of facts, to new conjectures of causes, and to new experiences of spiritual "power."

§ 4

Our conclusion is that, while the application is to be new, the principle of thankfulness to be applied is one and unchangeable—the habit of recognizing Christ everywhere, within and without us, as the Word of God making war against evil. On the one hand, to be absorbed in mere thankfulness for one's own peace and salvation tends to egotism. On the other, no thankful contemplation of mere externalities will suffice to produce that inward "power" without which Christian life is dead.

i St Paul combines both these kinds of thankfulness, and we need to see the Universe with his eyes, hear with his ears, feel with his heart.

One obstacle to our doing this consists in our familiarity with his words. We think (wrongly) that we "know all about them," and this prevents us from learning more from them. Another obstacle lies in the difference between our times and his, between Jewish thought and English, between the Roman empire under Nero and Christendom in the nineteenth century. No such obstacles prevent our understanding an English writer of two hundred and fifty years ago, who, more perhaps than any other of our countrymen, has expressed the causes for Christian joy in such a manner as to help us to enter into the meaning of some aspects of the thankfulness of St. Paul.

ii "I saw the infinite love of God. I saw also that there was an ocean of darkness and death; but an infinite ocean of light and love, which flowed over the ocean of darkness."[1]

"I saw into that which was without end, things which cannot be uttered, and of the greatness and infiniteness of the love of God, which cannot be expressed by words. For I had been brought through the very ocean of darkness and death, and through and over the power of Satan, by the eternal glorious power of Christ; even through that darkness was I brought which covered over all the world, which chained down all, and shut up all in the death. . . . Then could I say I had been in spiritual Babylon,

[1] George Fox's Journal, London, 1765, p. 12.

Sodom, Egypt, and the grave, but, by the eternal power of God I was come out of it, was brought over it, and the power of it, into the power of Christ."[1]

"One morning as I was sitting by the fire, a great cloud came over me, a temptation beset me, and I sat still. It was said, 'All things come by nature': and the elements and stars came over me, so that I was in a manner quite clouded with it. But, as I sat still and said nothing, the people of the house perceived nothing. And, as I sat still under it and let it alone, a living hope and a true voice arose in me, which said, 'There is a living God who made all things.' Immediately, the cloud and temptation vanished away, and life rose over it all: my heart was glad and I praised the living God."[2]

§ 5

Most Christians insist, and rightly, on the life-giving nature of the Eucharist. But perhaps comparatively few know, or, if they know, reflect, that Eucharist means simply "thanksgiving" or "thankfulness."

Without thankfulness, then, the great Thanksgiving instituted for us by Christ becomes no Thanksgiving. It degenerates into what St. Paul would call a "dead work."

St Augustine said to some one who was prevented

[1] Ib. p. 13. In the second line, "of the greatness" may mean "saw [somewhat] of the greatness," or possibly, "things of," i.e. belonging to, "the greatness."

[2] Ib. p. 15.

from partaking in the Holy Communion, "*Believe* and thou hast partaken." With equal truth may it be said, "*Be thankful* and thou hast partaken." The Psalmist describes, as the sacrifice that is pleasing to God, "a broken and a contrite heart." The Apostle teaches us, following in our Master's steps, to offer up a still better sacrifice in which sorrow is swallowed up in joy and contrition in gratitude:[1] "as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 10.

BOOK V

LAW AND SPIRIT

OR

THE EVOLUTION OF THE LATER CHURCHES

CHAPTER I

THE LAW OF THE CHURCH

1 The reaction towards Law

§ 1

WHEN Jesus of Nazareth died, rose from the dead, and ascended to heaven, leaving a new Spirit behind Him, it was necessary (and indeed He had predicted) that His action should be followed by reaction. The Incarnation was, in one aspect, an efflorescence; but, in another, it was a sowing of seed, which could not become fruitful until it had died. We are now to witness this "dying." Not that there will not also be, simultaneously, blossom and fruit as well as "dying." Still, we are now to speak mainly of the latter, noting how the germ of Christian faith was influenced by Judaistic and Pagan traditions, and, generally, by the environment of "this world." This process of necessary decay we may roughly describe as a reaction (disguised in different shapes) from "the Spirit" to "Law."

§ 2

This reaction might also be described as one "from faith to dogma." But so many misunderstand, and so many more misuse, the word "dogma," that it requires definition and explanation.

i At Athens, when the democratic assembly decreed anything, the decree began thus, "*It seemed good* to the Demos to do this or that." By "seemed" they did not mean that they were in doubt. It was the quiet Greek way of saying that they had made up their minds as to the best course. "That which has seemed good" was therefore equivalent to "decree," "resolution"; and, as such resolutions were seldom re-discussed or rescinded, the word implied indisputability and unalterableness.

The Greek word for "that which has seemed good" is *dogma*.

ii The Greek word came also to be used for any "resolution" or "conviction" arrived at by individuals as well as by councils, and by philosophers as well as by rulers. For example, it was a "dogma" of Epicurus, that pleasure, and of Epictetus that freedom from trouble, was the greatest blessing.

But, when a "conviction" has sprung up in an original and leading mind, from special insight, experience, or other causes, and when it is communicated to inferior, imitative minds, devoid of those special qualities, it is easy to see that disciples, accepting what was a living "conviction" to their teacher as a "decree" to

themselves, may accept it mechanically and unintelligently, with the result of being misled.

iii In the teacher, and in those disciples who are in sympathy with the teacher and follow his processes, the conviction is a belief in what may be conveniently called self-discovered or self-recognized truth: in his other disciples, it is a belief in authoritatively enunciated truth, that is to say, in authority.

For example, in Galileo, and in those who intelligently follow Galileo's thought, the proposition that "the earth moves" is a self-discovered, or self-recognized truth, like a proposition of Euclid: and in these, no one would call it a dogma, any more than the Pons Asinorum would be called a dogma. But in the great mass of those who affirm it, who have thought nothing, and know nothing, about it, the proposition becomes—though, of course, they would not call it so—a "dogma." They are certain of it. But it is because the experts and authorities are certain. Let the authorities change their minds to-day and these people will change to-morrow. We do not say they are wrong (on the contrary, they are right) in believing in authority, where they have no time or opportunity for studying the facts that would help them to belief at first hand. We merely distinguish between the two kinds of belief. And every one will admit that, as far as possible, second-hand should be exchanged for first-hand belief. In the non-moral world, "dogma" is often necessary; but conviction is better.

But where the teaching bears on morality, mechanical

learning is not equally harmless. Epicurus taught that pleasure was the greatest blessing. But he would perhaps have defined "pleasure" in such a way as to enable him to censure a disciple who proceeded, on the strength of this "dogma," to devote himself to daily intoxication: and assuredly Epictetus would have indignantly disowned a follower who resorted to the same means in order to procure "freedom from trouble." Whatever the two philosophers might do, or not do, we should censure such a man on the ground that he "ought to know better." In other words, he has no right to accept from any one mechanically, and merely on authority, "ready-made convictions"—that is to say, "dogmas"—on matters affecting morality; for he ought to have original convictions of his own. In the moral world, "dogma" ought to be unnecessary: and "dogma" ought never to prevail against "conviction."

§ 3

In the Christian Churches, "dogma" generally means a theological or moral proposition affirmed by authority and especially by that of a Church Council.

i Of course, there has been no need to affirm authoritatively propositions that no one has ever denied, or could deny. Hence, the term has generally been restricted to disputed or disputable statements.

Again, heretics have comparatively seldom denied the *statements* of Scripture, but only the orthodox *interpretations* of them. If, therefore, a Church Council had set forth its "dogma" or "decree" in the words

of the Bible, a heretic could have replied, "I can agree to that," and would have remained in the Church. The result has been that a Church dogma is seldom expressed in continuous Scriptural language.

In order to understand the decree of a Church Council, it is obviously useful, and often needful, to understand the heresy that it attacked, and the times and the circumstances in which it was passed. These constitute, as it were, the context of the proposition. Hence arises another peculiarity of dogma, namely, that it is often unintelligible without a study of ecclesiastical history, as in the case of statements about "confounding the Persons and dividing the Substance" of the Divine Nature. And even where a dogma quotes a few words of Scripture, the absence of the context, or some peculiarity of interpretation, may make all the difference, as, for example, in quoting "He that believeth not shall be damned." Here, a study of the passage might shew, 1st, that "condemned," the correct rendering, did not imply all that is implied in "damned"; 2nd, that the words were not really a part of St. Mark's Gospel; and, 3rd, that they were never intended to be applied to those to whom the Gospel had not been preached.

ii These considerations meet the objection that "Pauline, Johannine, or Synoptic propositions are 'dogmas,' just as much as the propositions of the Athanasian Creed or the Thirty-nine Articles."

The propositions of Scripture are the words of a great number of specially inspired men, spoken or written amid specially inspiring circumstances, full of

the heat and living power of individual conviction, full also of allusion, metaphor, hyperbole, and poetry, so that, in order to receive their whole meaning, we are forced to study the context and to attempt to enter into the spirit of their authors. A great gulf divides our Lord's "Swear not at all" from the Anglican Article that inculcates the duty of taking an oath before a magistrate. To enter into the meaning of the former there is need of Christ's Spirit; to comprehend the latter there is no such need.

iii The advantages of a dogma (such a one, for example, as that "baptism," or "a priest's absolution," is "essential to salvation") are that it may be easily taught, easily (in some sense) understood, readily learned, and sometimes firmly retained, and that, when retained, it greatly influences conduct.

The disadvantages are that, if the process of teaching and learning is mechanical, it will demoralize and despiritualize both teacher and learner; that ease of understanding often implies that there is nothing deep or spiritual to be understood; that the quick learning may be like the quick growth of a weed that chokes something better than itself; that the firm retention may imply a future difficulty (or impossibility) in eradicating error; and that the influence of dogma over conduct has largely been in the direction of dulness of brain and hardness of heart. Moreover, in those instances where dogma, implanted in the child, is eradicated in the youth or man, it is not uncommon to find a simultaneous eradication of all Christian belief.

iv In teaching the truths of Christ's religion, we cannot of course dispense with propositions, but it is very doubtful whether they should take the form of "dogma."

The truths suggested by Christ's Spirit we may teach, either in the language of our own generation, or by bringing our pupils into contact with the spirit of the Apostles and the Evangelists through the words of Scripture. To teach in either of these ways is far harder than to teach "dogma," as "dogma" is commonly taught. But either of these is real teaching, and not "cramming." Of all kinds of "cramming," spiritual "cramming" is infinitely the worst, resulting in mental, moral, and spiritual disease.

v "Convictions" may be likened to those divine statutes and judgments [1] which "if a man do, he shall live in them." But if men will not be at the pains of forming their own "convictions" in each generation, they are liable to receive from the retribution of God a law of "dogmas," concerning which the Prophet has written,[2] "I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments wherein they should not live."

§ 4

Even in the Pauline Churches, and in St. Paul's days, there were occasional reactions towards Law, and this, among converted Gentiles.

[1] Ezek. xx. 11. [2] Ib. 25.

i The converted Galatians are described as being almost in a moment "bewitched" and "seduced" from the true Gospel by teachers who persuaded them that circumcision, if not necessary, was at all events a mark of spiritual superiority, or perhaps a merit in God's eyes, so that Gentiles, as well as Jews, should desire it.

The Epistle to the Colossians speaks of other teachers, who combined with "a voluntary worshipping of angels" rules of asceticism ("touch not, taste not, handle not") altogether contrary to St. Paul's assertion that every created thing is sanctified to men by thankfulness.

ii If St. Paul himself found it necessary to protest against the abuse of his doctrine concerning "freedom from Law," and to declare that,[1] though all things are lawful, "all things are not expedient," it is not surprising that others went beyond protesting, and favoured the reactionary tendency. To understand their motives, we must try to place ourselves in the position of a Christian seeking an answer to the religious questions that arose towards the end of the first century.

St. Paul had laid down no law as to circumcision. True, he had apparently refused to circumcise Titus, who was a Gentile. But what as to Timothy, whose father was a Gentile and whose mother a Jewess? Him the Apostle was said to have circumcised. Was this to be a precedent? Were the Christian children of Jewish mothers always to be circumcised? Still more, was pure Jewish descent always to necessitate circumcision

[1] 1 Cor. vi. 12.

for a Christian child? What "law" was to be laid down?

Further, as to the celebration of Jewish fasts and feasts by Jews, or by Gentiles, or by neither; as to the conduct and order of Christian worship; and as to the casting out and re-admission of sinners according to the nature of their offence and proof of their repentance, the cry would arise—as soon as the Apostles had passed away, if not before—"Give us a *law*."

Christian worship is said to have at first followed, in some respects, the forms observed in the synagogue. But none can read St. Paul's description of the Corinthian church-meetings without perceiving that, in Corinth at all events, there was danger of chaos. Some governing body was needed to make "laws" even for the simple purposes of a liturgy. When the fall of Jerusalem had deepened the gulf between Jew and Christian, the tendency would be to differentiate the Jewish and the Christian rite—for example, to meet always on the first day, instead of the seventh, to celebrate the Crucifixion and Rising of Christ at some time different (if possible) from that of the Jewish Passover, and, generally, to create new forms, new fasts, and new feasts. But, to settle all these things, some kind of "law" was needful.

2 *The Sacraments become the basis of a law*

§ 1

The new law-making power gradually devolved, in appearance, upon that one of the "elders" who was chosen to preside over the rest, that is to say, the bishop.

i But the early intercourse between Church and Church, favoured by the facility of rapid communication between the different parts of the Empire, soon stepped in to prevent each bishop from being a law to himself and his diocese. This evil was also arrested by the reverence doubly due to the decisions of certain bishops, not only as representing predominant cities such as Corinth, Ephesus, Antioch, Jerusalem, Rome, but also as being the episcopal successors of St. Paul, St. John, St. James, or St. Peter.

Along with these influences came that of Roman Law and Roman organization. From (1) the single Bishop to (2) Councils of Bishops presided over by Archbishops or Patriarchs, and so, by degrees (in the Latin Church), to the Bishop of Rome, (3) first as president in the Councils of the Church, and (4) at last as successor of St. Peter and inheritor of the Petrine Promise, there passed the power of making laws for the Church.

ii These laws, however, were often not really made by their ecclesiastical rulers for the people, but by the people through their rulers. The bishops modified results, by securing unity in different Churches, and somewhat more of intellectual consistency than could have been attained by popular government; but in following the general tendency toward "Law" they seem to have obeyed, or rather to have unconsciously represented, the popular craving for definite rules of life.

iii Nevertheless, Christians (though they did their best) could not easily compete with Jews in definiteness as to fasts and feasts, rites, ceremonies, and purifications. They had no Levitical Code for a basis of Tradition; and few of Christ's broad and general precepts lent themselves to code-making. Their best distinctive basis seemed to lie in Baptism, the Holy Communion, and the Forgiveness of Sins—three things that Christ appeared to have commanded them definitely and literally to *do*.

iv Their difficulties in rule-making were enhanced by two facts: 1st, the Greek records of our Lord's words vary considerably; 2nd, even where they agree, none could feel sure that they had Christ's exact words, since He did not speak Greek.

But when men had once persuaded themselves that their "salvation" *might* depend upon their knowledge of Christ's words, it was an easy step to infer that they *must* know, if not the exact words, at all events the exact doctrine that He intended to convey by the

varying words; and then no obstacle, intellectual or moral, could long prevent the multitude from further persuading themselves that they *did* know His exact doctrine. And then they argued back again so as to confirm their previous conclusion, namely, that their salvation not only might but *must* depend upon literally obeying His doctrine.

§ 2

As to baptism, then, the tendency was to lay stress, not on purification with "the spirit," but on baptism with water.

i Our Lord appears to have insisted on the former as necessary to salvation, and merely to have retained and assumed the latter (practised by John the Baptist and subsequently modified) as the accompanying sign of the former. But the former was invisible, the latter visible; the former could not be, the latter could be, literally and manifestly practised. Hence, the latter overshadowed the former, and a superstitious feeling began to attach itself to the mere outward sign, resulting in two opposite errors.

Some delayed baptism till the death-bed, because, by being baptized after they had become incapable of further sin, they could "wash away" the sins of the past and absolutely secure "salvation." Others thought it safer to baptize babes immediately after birth, because, if they died before being capable of any sin, they could absolutely secure "salvation."

ii Hence arose in some minds the notion that children dying unbaptized might be "damned," that is, condemned to everlasting punishment. Then others, to whom this seemed too unjust, invented a future intermediate state—still called "limbo," because it was a "*border* (limbus)" between hell and heaven—reserved for unbaptized infants.

As part of this inference, some argued themselves into a doctrine that all Pagans and heathens that had preceded Christ, not being baptized, must needs be excluded from heaven. Still more certainly it followed (in their judgment) that those who were living neither baptized, nor purposing to be baptized, must needs be "damned."

Hence, to a vast number of Christians, during many centuries, a Jew, a "Turk," or an "infidel," became a non-human animal, whom it was lawful to pray for, in Church, as being, in some sort, a man, or a "sheep erring from the fold," and yet to treat, out of Church, as a "dog."

§ 3

As to the Holy Communion, it was of course natural that the celebration should be performed by the "elders," and, if he happened to be present, by the chief elder or bishop. Naturally, also, the celebrants repeated the words uttered by Jesus, and those handed down by St. Paul, in connection with the distribution of the elements.

i But, in course of time, it seemed not enough to say that an "elder" was the fittest person to preside

on these occasions : they went further and said that he was the *only* person. No layman, no deacon must celebrate.

The Eucharist represents communion between man and man in the Church, that is to say, in the Body of Christ, and therefore in God : but it also represents something more, namely, the sacrifice of Christ, and, as being included therein, the sacrifice of the whole Church, and also the sacrifice of each believer, through Christ, to God. But a sacrifice implied, both to Jews and Gentiles, a "priest."

Hence, even before the Empire became converted and began to patronize the Church, it was natural that there should arise the custom of regarding and honouring the presbyters or elders as "priests," whose privilege it was to offer up the sacrifice of the Lord's body and blood.

ii It then became natural that officiating "priests" should wear special priestly vestments, such as were worn by Jewish or Pagan priests. Externally, the act of blessing and distributing bread and wine could not compare in impressiveness with the slaying of a victim. All the more needful was it to add indirect impressiveness to the Christian sacrifice by all possible earthly decorations and symbolisms.

iii Thus, by degrees, attention being fastened on the material side of the Eucharist, on the visible act, and on the audible words, it became natural to lay stress on the exact utterance of the latter, as a kind of charm—and this though, as has been shewn above,

there is great uncertainty as to the words actually employed by Jesus.

But, as soon as the words, "Take, eat, this is my body" came to be used as a charm, the spiritual meaning of Christ's loving and pathetic sacrifice for His disciples was in danger of being overlooked, giving place to the mere recognition of a propitiatory miracle.

The next consequence was a feeling that the words "This is my body" must be somehow literally true, and this in a material sense; material for the multitude, quasi-material, perhaps, for the priests or for the more thoughtful among them; but, for both alike, in such a sense as to imply some miraculous act of transubstantiation capable of being performed by none but "priests."

3 Priests and Sacerdotalism

§ 1

The Pauline doctrine implies that there are to be no "priests" in the Christian Church. "Apostles," "prophets," "teachers," yes: but "priests," nowhere. The Epistles do not even mention the word. The Apocalypse [1] regards all the followers of Christ as "a kingdom and priests," destined to "reign upon the earth." It does not follow that it is anti-Christian for us to have ecclesiastical functionaries specially called "priests," any more than to have secular functionaries

[1] Rev. i. 6, v. 10.

specially called "kings." Nor is it necessarily anti-Christian to restrict the celebration of the Holy Communion, as a rule, to the former functionaries, for the sake of order, reverence, and the common good. But to assert that the celebration can, under no circumstances, be acceptable to God, unless administered by special functionaries, and unless these functionaries are called "priests," is altogether contrary to the spirit of Pauline Christianity.

Grant, however, the need of "priests" to administer the Eucharist, and grant that therein the material bread was converted into the material or quasi-material Body of God by the priest *alone*, and then it is easy to explain the metamorphosis of Christianity into Sacerdotalism.

It had come to be thought no less necessary for Christians to eat of the visible Bread on the altar for the sake of their souls than it was to eat ordinary bread and meat for the sake of their bodies. Hence, to be excluded from eating the former might mean death; and that eternal; and to inflict this rested with the priests. Was not this certain to strengthen the popular tendency to leave religion to the priests, and to take facts, precepts, and inferences from them? If a priest could make the Body of God, what, in the province of religion, could he *not* do?

Hence, when the clergy at last decided (lest the Blood of Christ should be spilt) to deprive the laity of the Cup, the latter acquiesced; and superstitious reverence deprived the whole of the Church, with the exception of the very small minority called "clerical," of one-half of the Sacrament instituted by our Lord.

§ 2

Along with these restrictions went the process of reserving to priests that power of forgiveness which Christ apparently intended to impart to all that had received His Holy Spirit.[1] The priests alone could perform the miracle of the Eucharist: it was an easy step to infer that on the priests alone must devolve the power of excluding sinners from it, and of re-admitting those who had repented and obtained forgiveness.

i During the apostolic days, the disciplinary power of "binding" and "loosing," of "retaining" sins and "remitting" them, of casting out sinners and re-admitting penitents, appears to have been exercised in each congregation by the whole body acting through their presbyters or elders, with the Apostles, if present: and, at first, the fresh Spirit of Christ in their hearts would preserve them from formalizing the process of forgiving and reducing it to a mere mechanical act.

But, as Law encroached upon Grace, "forgiving" or "remission" became a formal ecclesiastical act, not to be performed except by specialists and on the fulfilment of certain prescribed conditions; and these specialists were naturally the "priests."

The Church, however, could not leave altogether to

[1] John xx. 19–22 describes Jesus as imparting this power to "the disciples," not to "the twelve" or "the apostles." Indeed he expressly tells us that Thomas was absent. The promise made by Jesus to Peter (Matth. xvi. 19) is rightly taken as a promise made, not to Peter alone, but to the Christian world so far as it is inspired by the Petrine faith in Christ. The same is true in John xx. 19–22.

the caprice of individual priests the decision of the conditions of absolution. Hence arose the need of distinctions between non-venial and venial sins, and between more or less efficacious acts of penitence for sin. But how could the priest adequately discharge these duties of condemning, acquitting, sentencing, and remitting, without hearing what the person to be condemned or acquitted had to say? In the early Church, a sinner sometimes confessed his sins to the whole congregation: but how much kinder and more considerate to him to require that they should be confessed privately to the priest! Only, for the purpose of regular Communion, there must be regular confession. Thus arose that most powerful engine of sacerdotalism, the confessional.

ii Among acts of penitence must be reckoned prayers. Hence it became customary to prescribe for this purpose a score, a hundred, or a thousand repetitions of a Pater Noster, thus formalizing and degrading private prayer.

Again, "mortification of the flesh" was an act of "penitence." Hence, degrees of fasting, and self-scourging, and wearing of painful garments, and other self-inconveniences or self-tortures,—expiations arranged on a system, and apportioned to their several sins.

In special cases—for example, in consequence of bad health—remissions, or indulgences from these penitential acts, could be given by ecclesiastical authority. In course of time, such "indulgences" were occasionally given without regard to the special case, and even before the actual commission of sin.

But if a man could sin with the certainty of receiving an "indulgence" from his due penitential act, the immunity might tempt him to sin again. And so an "indulgence" from acts of "penitence" degenerated into an indulgence of sin; and such "indulgences" were openly sold and bought on the popular understanding that the buyer might sin—up to the amount of his purchase money—with impunity.

§ 3

Forgiveness of sins in this world could not be thus formalized without a corresponding formalization of Christ's doctrine concerning retribution in the world to come.

i Hence sprang systems of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven; and then, a classification of the means for avoiding Hell, attaining Heaven, and emerging from Purgatory.

Prayers, fastings, mortifications of the flesh—all these a sinner could practice for himself, while living. But what when he was dead? Could the priests now do nothing for him, just when he needed it most because he could do nothing for himself? True, he might be in Hell, where his case would be hopeless. But, on the other hand, he might be in Purgatory: and there, could not the prayers of the priests penetrate so as to assuage and shorten his sufferings? Might he not arrange for so many prayers, at so much a year, for all time? Was it not at least worth trying?

In truth, prayer for the dead, when it is really

prayer, that is to say, the heart's wish, placed before God in faith and hope, may avail as much for the dead as for the living. But the corrupt Church made no distinction between what Victor Hugo has called the "heart-prayers (prières)" of the people and the "word-prayers (oraisons)" of chantry priests, between prayers of nature and prayers of machinery.

Not that the clergy were necessarily the first to go wrong. Possibly they shrank back and needed to be goaded onward by the laity. To the passionate enquiry of an agonized sinner whether the whole of his lands if devoted to the Church might not avail something for his soul, kindliness might preclude an abrupt negative; and in answer to his reiterated "Is it not worth trying?" mere pity for his agonies might elicit at first a half-reluctant, half-believing "Perhaps it is." But in time these good-natured self-deceivers would inevitably grow callous: and then the lucrative aspect of the business would first occur to them and presently predominate; and finally they would fall into a fervid belief that it was the imperative duty of an average dying layman to make the customary arrangements, so useful to all parties. Thus people were first allowed, then encouraged, afterwards stimulated, and finally often compelled, to leave fortunes to priests who for all generations might offer up in their behalf mere "orisons"—that is to say, vibrations of air, as efficacious as the turnings of a Buddhist prayer-wheel.

ii Thus, that very avenue to God which Christ had thrown open, the corrupt Church closed, so far as it could, by sometimes expressly enjoining, and sometimes

encouraging, instead of private prayer, those "vain repetitions" which Christ had expressly forbidden.

And, as though this did not suffice, it went further, and decreed that the public prayers should remain still offered in the Latin language, which had long ceased to be understood by the common people. The Scriptures, too, were to be read in the same unintelligible tongue. Thus, the larger part of the laity was reduced, so far as public prayer was concerned, to a state of dumbness, and, so far as the Scriptures were concerned, to a state of deafness.

And now, rendered individually callous to the touch of the Holy Spirit by reason of the desecration of private prayer, and bereft of the power of hearing and speaking in public worship, the mass of the congregation, having no avenue left towards Christ but the sense of sight, was forced to concentrate itself on such an aspect of its religion as could be expressed in images or pictures, and, above all, in the Sacrifice of the Mass.

4 The worship of Christ merged in the worship of the Virgin

§ 1

No pictures could paint Christ's Spirit as the Gospels or as St. Paul's Epistles express it. Moreover, some of those Gospel subjects that were best adapted for painting were not the best to set forth Christ's spiritual

self. It was easy to paint Christ working visible wonders, or coming on the clouds of heaven in a visible shape: but it was difficult, and scarcely possible for one artist in a thousand, to exhibit Christ on the Cross or in Gethsemane so as to give the spectator a glimpse of His spiritual and invisible sacrifice.

Hence, the exclusion of the laity from the Scriptures, and their concentration on the picturesque scenes of Christ's life, tended to fix their thoughts on Christ as a past Wonder-worker in a distant time and country, or as a future Judge to be expected with dread from heaven, or as the Body and Blood upon the altar before their eyes; not as an ever-present Friend on earth, not as the Eternal Son in heaven.

There was one apparent exception. In the austere desert of their now terrible Gospel, the pictures of the birth and infancy of Jesus presented to the popular mind an oasis in which men, women, and children could all rejoice: "Towards His mother, at all events," they felt, or some felt, "Jesus must have been human." In Mary's arms might not the Saviour be contemplated as something different from a Judge?

At this point, there intervened the mystery of the Miraculous Conception, forcing men to ask: "After all, even in the cradle, was Christ ever a *real* child? Could a babe pronounce a blessing on its mother with the three extended fingers in the priestly fashion, as some of the painters painted Him? Perhaps, then, Christ was *not*, and never had been, a child in the ordinary sense."

Even before this, it was difficult to deify a mere child. But at all events, after this thought had filtered

downwards into the hearts of the people, it was inevitable that their eyes should pass upward from the Babe—human as well as divine in the creeds, but non-human in the pictures, non-human in the popular imagination—to rest on the genuinely human Mother, at once the Bride and Parent of God.

§ 2

We Protestants protest, and rightly, against the virtual deification of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. Yet, in the mediæval Church, as then existent, the worship of the Blessed Virgin, though, in a sense, corrupt, was an antidote against greater corruptions. Christ being converted, for the masses, into an unforgiving Judge, or a Mechanism of Salvation, and the Holy Spirit being almost absent from their religious contemplations, the idea of the Virgin had to represent at once the loving interceding Saviour and also that gentle, all-enduring, all-hoping Influence, so lowly yet so aspiring, which is the saving element in society and the strongest of all the bonds that knit the spiritual world together—"charity" or Christian love.

The early heresy that represented the Holy Spirit as feminine, if it does not contain a truth, at least protests against a possible error. The Holy Spirit of God is of no gender, or of all genders. When regarded as the Spirit of "communion," it must be feminine as well as masculine and neuter. This fundamental truth is expressed by the worship of Mary the Mother of Jesus in Latin Christianity.

Christianity is impossible without enthusiasm. For

Christ the Judge, the Wonder-worker, the non-human, none could be enthusiastic. But enthusiasm for the Virgin, inspiring multitudes of the devout in all ranks in the Middle Ages, vitalized a Christianity otherwise dead because otherwise loveless. The religion of the Virgin could not be reasonable or just; but it at least expressed the worship of pure love and not of throned injustice. The mediæval conception of the Mother of God was, by comparison, more worthy of worship than the mediæval conception of the Son.

5 *The celibacy of the Clergy*

§ 1

"Monks," *i.e.* "*solitary* (saints)," and "cenobites," *i.e.* "(saints) *who live in common*," existed before the time of Christ; and it is not surprising that, in the early centuries of the Church, the craving to be free from the temptations of warfare, business, and wealth, led men to form Christian societies aiming at a holiness which, especially during the breaking up of the Roman empire, seemed unattainable in "the world."

By degrees the saint who dwelt by himself came to be called "hermit" (that is to say, "(dweller) *alone*," or "(dweller) *in the wilderness*"). Then the word "monk" was used of those who dwelt in "solitary *companies*." These had all things in common. They spent their time in prayer and labour of various kinds.

There were Jewish "monks" or "cenobites" (called

Essenes) even before the times of Jesus. In some of these societies marriage was allowed. But the traditions of the Christian Church (probably, too, the doctrine of St. Paul, detached from its general context) were against such an allowance. It became the rule for Christian monks to be unmarried.

Some of the purest and noblest spirits of Christendom found a home in these societies; and when the lamp of Christian holiness seemed in danger of expiring they helped to keep it alight. Monasteries were also, in many cases, centres of civilization, humanity, and learning, in the midst of barbarism and darkness.

§ 2

Yet, by withdrawing from "the world," these good men made "the world," in some respects, worse. By creating a special "life of religion," they caused all outside the monastery, first to feel, and ultimately to avow, that they were not "religious." "To enter religion" came at last to mean "to enter a monastery, or a religious order."

i Marriage, incompatible with "religion" in this sense, soon came to be considered an inferior condition, and then fell into a kind of religious disrepute, which speedily affected the clergy in the parishes. For how could they endure to remain thus "inferior" to their monastic brethren? Besides, it was found that the parochial cleric was more obedient to orders from his ecclesiastical superiors, more unencumbered and serviceable, more despotically powerful over the laity, when

not distracted by domestic cares. Hence marriage, among the clergy, was first looked on with disfavour and finally prohibited.

ii This widened the severance between the laity and the clergy, between "religion" and "the life of the world," so that plain people realized now more than ever that religion was a special subject of which they could know nothing except what the clergy told them.

iii But the laity were still allowed to know something of "morality." Being husbands and fathers of families, they often knew more about the common-sense ethics of the home and the meaning of affection, than the clergy could understand.

Thus, sometimes, while the clergy "understood" what was dictated by "religion," the laity "felt" what was dictated by "morality." When the dictates were opposite, what followed? Morality had to give way to religion under penalty of "eternal damnation." Then "religion" became immoral; "damnation," an instrument to deter men from well-doing; and "the Church" fell below the level of "the world."

6 *The good and evil in Mediævalism*

§ 1

Amid these rising vapours, now almost blotting out Christ from the heaven of Christians, there were always

some souls that could rise up through faith to a purer region of the Sun of righteousness, whence they brought back rays to enlighten themselves and their age. Nor ought we to deny that, from what we are forced to call evil, good was often evolved.

Although the celibacy of the clergy sometimes resulted (during periods of general laxity) in foul immoralities, which have left their stamp on contemporary ecclesiastical canons, yet under more favourable circumstances it helped to produce a particular type of simple, undistracted holiness and devotion to the interests of others such as, perhaps, is less often found among a married clergy. This was more than counterbalanced by ignorance of the life of the home, contempt of facts, blindness to the teaching of nature, callousness to moral lessons. But still the occasional spiritual good should be gladly admitted (not to speak of the avoidance of the possible danger from a hereditary caste of land-owning priests in feudal times).

Perhaps, too, some spectacular form of worship was almost necessary for the Middle Ages. The ritual of the Mass did at least bring before the minds of a few the fundamental truth that all spiritual life is based on sacrifice. Not improbably it did more for the many than we can easily define or logically set down on paper.

Nor is it reasonable—if we penetrate below the names of things to realities—that the worshippers of an unjust God, or of a non-human Christ, should stigmatize the worshippers of the Virgin Mary as "idolaters." It is far better and nobler—yes, and more in accordance with the principles of general adoration—to worship in

unselfish love, trust, and reverence, a character that has been created by our own unconscious imaginations, than, without these feelings, to "worship" any real Being.

§ 2

The nature of worship as well as the object of worship must be kept in view if we are to apprehend anything about the causes of the success and failure of Christianity in the Middle and Modern Ages.

Shall we define worship as "a combination of love, trust, and awe, all of them unselfish"? In that case, the devotion of a dog to a bad master, and that of a naturally servile and immoral servant to a Nero or a Tiberius, would be "worship." We must therefore add, "and all of them tending to the good of mankind." True worship is loyal devotion, such as is paid to a sovereign regarded as the head of the State, and to a general regarded as the head of the army,

Our conception of God should include all we have experienced, all we have read or heard of, and all we can imagine, as "worshipful." To call a man "worshipful" is now an antiquarianism: but the phrase recognizes a fact. Man, being made in God's image, ought to be, in some degree, "worshipful." Every one who has called forth towards himself, in contemporaries or posterity, somewhat of righteous love, trust, and reverence, that would not have existed but for his influence, has enlarged human conceptions of the Divine, and, by making men, in some sense, "worship" himself, has indirectly amplified their worship of God.

ii Socrates has done this for us : but, in the main, through the intellect. The calm self-containment of the Greek nature, and the absence of the Hebraic sense of sin, combine with the archness and irony that pervade his dialectic to stamp him rather as a teacher born to clear the mind from the mists of prejudice and passion, than as one whose mission it was to draw the veil from the countenance of Him whose eyes are too pure to behold iniquity.

Gautama, perhaps, might have done us even more effectual service than Socrates, had the former recognized a God. As it was, in the spirit of loving self-sacrifice and reverence for righteousness, he led men half-way upwards. The love and reverence of his followers accompanied him. But when he stopped, they found they had left hope behind them. For how trust hopefully in a leader who could not see, in the future, either himself, or any living Being on whom they might base their hope ? The vacancy could not be endured. The masses speedily re-introduced the Beings whom their master had ignored, atoning for their disobedience by placing him among or above them. But, to the end, their leader's original hopelessness made his spirit comparatively feeble and their worship of him comparatively barren.

§ 3

To worship a good man is better than to worship a babe : and the worship of Socrates, Gautama, or Shakespeare, would be far nobler than that of the infant Christ depicted in the apocryphal gospels. But we

claim for the object of our adoration that He is not only[1] "a full-grown man," but also a man made one with the Father in heaven, and one with the Spirit; and that the act of worshipping Him develops to their highest and purest the three emotions of worship.

i Even though there had been no manifestations of Christ's resurrection, He ought still to have been worshipped by His followers as a man who, alone among men, revealed God to us as at once a Father and a long-suffering Minister to His children, a God whom He so knew and loved that love and knowledge were one, and that He was one with the Father; so that in worshipping Him as the Son we worship the Father also. The silence of the grave might have been broken by no audible voice: yet, still, we ought to have felt the touch of His Spirit on ours—through faith in goodness, through our individual experience, through the records of His influence on His followers and the world—assuring us (as we are also assured, in a lower degree, about Socrates and Gautama) that He had invisibly triumphed over death.

ii Nevertheless, many might have felt that there was something wanting if Jesus had not been, as St. Paul says, "defined to be the Son of God" by the resurrection from the dead "according to the spirit of holiness." A man raised from the dead in virtue of inherent "holiness" is an altogether different thing from a man raised from the grave by merely material or

[1] Eph. iv. 13.

merely miraculous means. Rescue from the tomb by a physical process would involve marvel at the process, not at the rescued: to rise from the grave miraculously, apart from a causal righteousness, ought to create nothing but wonder at the miracle, no awe for the man that rises. But Jesus, who grappled with death in "the spirit of holiness," and so far prevailed that He communicated with His disciples visibly and audibly after the physical act of dying, is associated by *this* resurrection with some super-human Law of human and divine nature, indicating a subordination of the material to the spiritual: and this, when brought home to our hearts, generates a righteous awe and reverence for, and a righteous faith and trust in, Him who has thus arisen, because He seems now, not merely a man, and not merely one with the Father regarded as militant, but one with the Father divinely triumphant, the expression of a divine evolution, order triumphing over disorder, the Spirit of God brooding on the face of the waters.

§ 4

Talleyrand is said to have replied to some one who disclosed to him his plans for founding a (practically) new religion that perhaps the man's best course would be to be crucified and to rise again on the third day.

If this jest implied that any commonplace man or charlatan could found a new religion if he could rise from the dead, it is a falsehood worthy only of one who regards all men as base and all successful religions as succeeding because adapted to their baseness.

i But if it is taken to imply that Christ's manifestations to His disciples proved His religion to be in accordance with the fixed laws of human and divine relations, without accord with which no religion can permanently prosper, then we accept the dictum. Christ's resurrection then becomes to us the fore-ordained result of His infinite love, faith, and reverence—or of what St. Paul calls "the spirit of holiness." Death, we assert, is, in its more important sense, not a ceasing to breathe, but a ceasing to act. In the material sense, He died. In the spiritual sense, He assured His disciples that whosoever believed in Him should "never die." How then could He Himself thus die? When, therefore, He "died," or ceased to breathe, He must not be regarded as having ceased to act. If we ask how He continued to act, venerable traditions reply that He went at once from the Cross to "preach to the spirits in Hades." But are we to suppose that in going to the spirits He left His sorrowful disciples utterly desolate? How much more likely in itself, and accordant with results, to suppose that He began also at the same moment to "preach" to His disciples on earth, not to their ears but to their hearts, a gospel of pain and "travail," more efficacious than any of His spoken parables or predictions, preparing them through much tribulation to apprehend the manifestations of His presence and to receive and diffuse His Spirit!

His resurrection was, on the one hand, an objective, external act—perhaps we should call it quasi-external, independent of space, accomplished in "heaven"—but it was also an internal, subjective process, whereby, in

the heart of each disciple, as the result of some "virtue" that had passed forth from the Saviour, the way was prepared for the vision, so that, when the moment arrived, Christ appeared before the bodily eye because He already dwelt in the heart through love deepened by sorrow.

ii Then, too, we understand why Jesus was not, and could not be, worshipped as God by the disciples on earth. Not till He was taken from their sight and associated with the invisible world and the throne of the Supreme, would they feel that mysterious "awe" without which worship, at its highest, is impossible. Love for Him, in large measure, they had already; and their faith in Him, as expressed in Peter's confession, had called forth His blessing. But even these feelings were undeveloped. Before His death and resurrection, while they were still blindly unapprehensive and quarrelling for the first places in the Kingdom, how little could they understand of His fixed faith and His unutterable affection expressed in the gift of His body and blood before going forth to die for their sakes! And even had it been otherwise, awe was undeveloped. God is a Spirit: and Jesus could not be really worshipped as the Son of God till His Spirit was in their hearts and He was enthroned by them as being in the Spirit and one with the Father.

iii From all this it follows that, since the elevating influence of worship depends on two things, the nature of the object worshipped and the nature of the worshipper, the excellence of the former may be

neutralized by the defects of the latter, and the inferiority of the former compensated by the superiority of the latter. Gautama may become a better object of worship than the Saviour when the latter is regarded as a mere deliverer from punishment and not from sin. A man bred in a low religion, but with an eye for goodness and a faith in goodness, selects what is best in the object of popular worship and eschews the rest. A man bred in a high religion, but with an eye to self and a fear for self, selects what is worst, or even converts what is good to bad. *Corruptio optimi pessima.* If the devotee of Gautama surpasses many Christians, it is because his eye for goodness is keen, and ours is dull, his faith in goodness strong, and ours weak. But it is his merit, our demerit; not the merit of Gautama as compared with the demerit of Christ. A religion of hopelessness cannot be as helpful as a religion of hope; but it may be more helpful than a selfish parody of the religion of unselfishness, or a mere semblance that is no religion at all.

§ 5

Let us endeavour to apply these considerations to mediæval Christianity, in which, as we have seen, men's attention was diverted from the records of Christ's life and work, as a whole, to be fixed on Him as the Sacrifice on the altar, as the Judge, as the Crucified, and as the Babe in Bethlehem.

i As regards the Mass, for simple and saintly souls, coming to the altar with a sincere longing for pardon,

peace, and purity, we can well believe that the fundamental revelation of "the good God" giving Himself to be the food of His children could not be altogether obscured by any metaphysical or ecclesiastical figment. In these, a native love of righteousness would be nourished by a real presence of Christ, while the general earnestness and directness of mediæval faith would strengthen their trust in this particular sacrament. As for reverence, their feeling, as compared with ours, would be that which is felt by one who looks up to the stars as a nightly miracle, compared with that of one who sees in them God's laws of motion resulting in the harmony of visible Nature. The former is more child-like, and, as knowledge increases, tends to become childish: but it places God first, and nothing second. The latter is more matured, and less liable to assaults from knowledge: but, though it places God on the throne, it places Law beside God—as a servant, it is true, but with a possibility that, in moments of faithlessness, our hearts may let the Servant usurp the throne of the King.

On the other hand, for a bad man, accepting the sacrament as an absolute specific against damnation and with the hope of continuing to sin with impunity, it is difficult to set limits to the resulting moral and spiritual evil, or to say otherwise than in the words of the Evangelist: "After the sop, Satan entered into him."

Taking bad and good together, we may see, in this sacrament alone, much that will explain the startling extremes, the heights of saintliness and the depths of devilry, in the Christians of the Middle Ages.

ii We come now to the three mediæval pictures of Christ. Taking first that of the Judgment, we can hardly fail to recognize in it much evil, and only good of such a kind that we must speak of it as "permitted for the hardness of men's hearts." The words[1] "I came not to judge the world but to save the world," and the statement, in the same Gospel,[2] that Christ's word, rather than Christ Himself, would judge unbelievers, were practically effaced by the predominance of the conception of Christ as a judge and as a severe judge, not destroying sin but taking vengeance on sinners.

Once more, we may thankfully admit that the saintly might wholly eschew the evil, and that even the average Christian might in some cases unconsciously assume that Christ could not be quite so bad as He was painted. Nor must we deny that, in the midst of frightful wrongs and oppressions, this picture at all events held up before the oppressed a prospect of ultimate judgment on ill-doing, so as to keep alive a faith in the righteousness of God. Still, on the whole, the effect would seem to be necessarily bad, and the conclusion is confirmed by the literature of the times. The fear of such a judgment would be, for the most part, servile terror, quite distinct from the purifying thrill expressed in our old translation of the Psalms, "There is mercy with thee, therefore thou shalt be feared." More especially in the sinful would it encourage a tendency to believe in any fiction, and to resort to any propitiation, that might leave them a hope of continuing to sin within the protecting pale of the Church:

[1] John xii. 47. [2] Ib. xii. 48.

"There is no mercy with thee, therefore thou must be bribed."

iii The Crucifixion, interpreted in the light of the Judgment, would naturally be materialized so as to exclude all thought of Christ's spiritual suffering, and to emphasize its physical aspect. Thus, no longer able to be spiritually apprehended, it would present to some a picture of the Son suffering arbitrarily, needlessly, inexplicably; to others, a spectacle of vicarious or propitiatory suffering, in which a debt of physical pain due from sinful men was paid, in their behalf, by a sinless Saviour.

Here, again, we may rejoice that to the purer type of soul, not given to arguing logically but to feeling rightly, the sight of Christ on the Cross would bring home one, and but one, simple and inexpressibly precious thought, "God has suffered for me. I cannot understand; I love." Were it not so, things would go hard with Christians in our times as well as in the Middle Ages. For we, too, and with less excuse, have too often demoralized and despiritualized the story of Christ crucified. But in days when the painter's brush supplied the place of the words of the New Testament, the danger must have been, and is proved to have been, far greater. In some the Cross tended to raise love, trust, and awe; in others, though there may have been occasional thrills of unintelligent wonder tinged with terror, the predominating feeling was one of dull, settled, selfish recognition of the need of some propitiation such as is set forth by the murderer Macbeth, "Blood will have blood, they say."

§ 6

There remained the picture of the Babe in Bethlehem; and, as has been said above, the love called out by this was probably the most purifying element in mediæval Christianity. But it was not love of the Father revealed through the Son, nor was it love of the Son as revealing the Father. When the Son was transmuted into a Sacrifice or a Judge, the Father was thrust back into a darker darkness than that of Sinai; and there was nothing in the cradle of the infant Jesus that could undo this evil. Hence, in the picture of Bethlehem, the principal place was taken by Mary, "the Mother of God."

i Motherhood is deserving of worship. The feminine as well as the masculine side of the family on earth reveals to us somewhat of the Family in heaven. But the young and happy mother, rocking the cradle, affords but a rudimentary revelation of divinity as compared with the weary mother in later life, bearing and forbearing, loving in spite of ingratitude and trusting in spite of appearances, shaping the character of the child with the sympathetic touch of love, and insensibly doing the work of the Holy Spirit by becoming a "guide into all truth."

Unfortunately, this latter aspect could not be painted; the former could be. Moreover, the picture of the babe would naturally appeal to monks and nuns: who could see the beauty of this particular domestic scene, but could not enter into the invisible and spiritual loveliness

of a mother's work amid the wear and tear, and sometimes the squalor, of life, amid children that go wrong and cause annoyance and anxiety and are not attractive to artists. Yet the inferior revelation perhaps obscured the superior. It is doubtful whether the worship of the Virgin tended to purify the relations between the sexes or to sanctify the home. It gave men a glimpse of the Spirit, but of the Spirit in ecstasy; not of the Spirit doing its work on earth in brooding on the face of the waters, nor of the Spirit as we conceive it in heaven, expressing the unity of will between the Father and the "perfect," or "full-grown," Son.

ii Yet this work of the Spirit must be realized by all who would be true Christians in modern times. We cannot go back from the Christ in heaven even to the Christ "in the flesh," much less to the Christ in the cradle. If we do, we shall lose contact with all sorts of revelations in heaven and earth from time to time vouchsafed to us, and our faith may suffer. In any case, reverence must suffer. We shall forfeit that exalting and expanding awe which drives out servile dread. No high form of Christianity is now possible without the recognition, not only of the Three in One, but also of the Many in One, the Spirit of unity controlling multitudinous conflict, or collision, to one divine object. The true oneness of God can be revealed only to those who ponder over the marvel of oneness of will in more than one.

The babe at the mother's breast is a type, not of unity in will, but of community in nature. The scene is a

garden of Eden where conflict is not yet possible because knowledge is not yet imparted. But we are called upward to a better Paradise, where, after many conflicts, after much forgetting of the things that are behind and pressing onward to the things that are before, we shall be able, while ignoring nothing, to "believe all things," taking the Universe as our Bible, and love and faith and reverence as its interpreters, so that we shall at last attain unto[1] "the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a full-grown man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we may be no longer children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine."

[1] Eph. iv. 13.

CHAPTER II

THE LAW OF THE SCRIPTURES

1 The errors of the Reformers

§ 1

When the scandals of Mediæval Christianity detached a large part of Western Europe from the Church of Rome, the seceders were naturally unable at once to lay aside the inveterate belief that there must be *some* visible and infallible "Law" on earth for the followers of Christ. For the Reformers, the question was, not, "Is there such a Law?" but, "Where shall we find it?"

i Could they appeal from the Mediæval Church to the Early Church? If they had done so, they would have had to define "the Early Church," and to commit themselves, perhaps, to the orthodoxy of all the Patristic writings of, say, the first two, or three, or four centuries. On the whole, it seemed best to them, at least in England, to assert, or imply, that no Church, not even their own, was to be pronounced infallible, and that

even "general Councils" of the Church were liable to err.

ii This, as will be seen, amounted, logically, to a denial of any visible and infallible Law. However, they illogically took up a kind of stand on the "canonical" Scriptures, asserting that the Creeds must be accepted, not because they were handed down as true by the Church, but because they could be "proved by most certain warrants of holy Scripture."

This led to the conclusion that anything that could be "proved" by Scripture was true, and *a fortiori* that everything in Scripture was true.

iii This was manifestly reasoning in a circle. For how did they distinguish the canonical from the apocryphal Scriptures except on the ground that the Church (that is to say, certain "general Councils") had pronounced the former to be canonical and the latter to be uncanonical? But if "general Councils" "can err" and "have erred," why may they not have erred as to the canonical Scriptures? For example, why may they not have gone wrong in admitting the extremely doubtful Second Epistle of St. Peter, while they have rejected Ecclesiasticus?

§ 2

It speaks well for the canonical Scriptures that the Bible was found to be, for many generations of advanced Reformers, a fairly sufficient basis for Christian faith. Still, such a basis could not be permanent, for the following reasons.

i The logical inconsistency by which the basis had been established was certain, sooner or later, to create uneasiness.

Many of the Reformers were forced by the feeling of the times to claim *for themselves* what virtually amounted to infallibility. In theory, they maintained that each man must believe what he reasonably and conscientiously deduced from the Scriptures: but in practice, Calvin said to Servetus, "If you persist in deducing from the Scriptures any but the orthodox dogma of the divinity of Christ, I must burn you." And so they almost all said, and so they acted, whenever they had the upper hand.

ii By detaching themselves from the continuous belief and practice of several preceding generations, except so far as precedents could be "proved" by Scripture, they encouraged others to do the same. It became a custom for enquiring spirits, ignorant of the circumstances that determined the meaning of scriptural utterances, to seek eternal life in their own wild, fanciful, and utterly irrational interpretations of isolated texts. Thus one sect branched into two or three, and each of these into two or three more. This would have mattered less, if they could have agreed to differ, perceiving that their differences were mostly of an intellectual, not a moral, character. But by stigmatizing one another as schismatics, they contracted the Pharisaic habit of confusing mistakes with sins. In order to exclude the religious views of others, they miserably narrowed their own.

Breaking absolutely with the past, some of the

Reformers ignored just those experiences of the Mediæval Church from which they might have learned useful lessons. They rejected art, beauty, and symbolism, as allies in congregational worship.

While stigmatizing the worship of the Mother of the Lord as "idolatrous," few of them did much—except indirectly, by making the Scriptures accessible—to bring the Lord Himself before the minds of men as a natural object of "non-idolatrous" worship. They revived the study of Scripture through Hebrew and Greek and the earliest commentaries; but they did not illustrate it enough by the facts of human nature and the best experiences of the Christian Church.

iii Again, in practically basing all truth on proof from Scripture, the Reformers placed themselves at a temporary disadvantage when compared with the Romanists.

When meeting an attack drawn from the Scriptures, a Romanist could say, "Although the Scriptures are *true*, we do not regard them as plain. And it is only when interpreted by the Catholic Church that they are even *true*. To heretics, who persist in reading into the Scriptures their own perverse falsehoods, the Scriptures must needs be *false*. The Church, no doubt, has some interpretation that will meet your argument. We leave these matters to the Church."

But a Reformer based his faith, not only on Scripture, but also on what could be "proved" from Scripture. By this he often meant, "What *I* can prove from Scripture." But, when confronted with what *other* people "proved" from the same source, he was forced

to confess that there was endless discrepancy in what professed to be reasonable inferences from Scripture, so that Scripture proof did not afford full guidance.

He had, in effect, appealed to Reason, and the appeal had to be taken from court to court with results altogether unexpected. Beginning, at first, by reasoning *from* Scripture, he was insensibly led to reason *about* Scripture and the means of interpreting it; and then about *the light thrown on Scripture by facts*; and next, about the *apparent discrepancy* between *facts outside Scripture* and *alleged facts in Scripture*; and so, at last, to find himself—if he had not broken off in time—arguing *against Scripture where Scripture was contradicted by facts.*

The disadvantage was only temporary. In the end, an indolent excess in "leaving things to the Church" is sure to tell against the conscience and intellect of the members of that Church. But, perhaps for generations yet to come, the broad and easy path of blind Faith in Authority will be more attractive than the narrow and painful path of reasonable Faith in Righteousness. The Faith of the Reformers was a compromise between the two, less reasonable than the latter, less easy and attractive than the former.

§ 3

In church discipline and church organization many of the Reformers ignored experience. Christ sent His disciples forth "two and two"; and even men of the world recognize, with Francis Bacon, that "collegiate experience" is the nurse of enthusiasm. Yet the

Reformers, as a rule, remembering the defects of the Mediæval orders, forgot the successes of their religious socialism. The Wesleyans, indeed, in their class-system, and in their use of lay-preachers, as well as in some other points of church discipline, shewed a knowledge of human nature to which they appear to be largely indebted for their marvellous success; but such originality was too expansive for the narrow limits of the Anglican Church of the eighteenth century.

The Reformers revived, it is true, the Pauline theology, but without supplying those interpretations of it which they might have deduced from increased knowledge of human nature. And sometimes they misinterpreted it. For example, St. Paul had said that men received the righteousness of God in Christ "*by means of* faith." But some of the Reformers read this as meaning "*because of* faith," that is, "*at the price of* faith." Thus "faith" became a "dead work," a mere mental enterprise undertaken for hope of reward or through fear of punishment, and St. Paul's theology of the Spirit became a theology of Law.

§ 4

But the greatest evil of all in the Reformed Churches arose from their regarding the Bible as almost exclusively entitled to be called "the Word of God"—an error that led them to ignore the Word of God speaking in nature, history, science, art, and poetry.

When they read the Psalms, or the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, they admitted, theoretically, that the Word of God was from the beginning, and that

"through the word of the Lord the heavens were made"; but they did not go on to admit, and rejoice in the admission, that the Word of God speaks to us through Nature, and above all, through human nature.

Again, by dwelling on this title of the Bible, they made people suppose that every word of the Bible was equally inspired, and all of it "profitable for salvation," so that, for example, there must be something spiritually beneficial for children in committing to memory the boundaries of Canaan, or the lists of the kings of Israel and Judah.

"I had the gratification to hear William Quintal say part of the Catechism and answer several questions as to his knowledge of the redemption in Christ, and of the different *habits of the Jews, their sects and diseases!*" So runs an extract from the account of the natives of Pitcairn's Island given by the Captain of H.M.S. Seringapatam in 1830. We smile at the anti-climax. But really it represents, without caricature, a large part of the religious teaching now prevalent in the Reformed Churches.

Such doctrine has nothing to do with morality. It has hardly any bearing even on the mere historical facts and circumstances of Christ's life. Jewish children may imbibe from the driest details of the Old Testament some sense of exclusive dependence on a God who has chosen them from all the nations of the earth, and has condescended to give them a special Law; but children of Christian Gentiles gain from them nothing at all (when they are taught as a spiritual lesson) except a confusion both of the moral and of the historical sense.

2 Their compensations

§ 1

Against these disadvantages must be set some very great advantages :

(1) First, and among the greatest of all, at least for Teutonic races, the dethronement of celibacy from its assumed position of superior sanctity, and the restoration of the sanctity of the home, the mother of all true and permanent moral religion.

(2) The restoration of the sense of individual responsibility to God, that is to say, the sense that each man has a conscience and is bound to act upon it.

(3) The restoration (at least to some extent) of the Pauline doctrine of "faith," as meaning, not a mere readiness to believe anything that one is told to believe by ecclesiastical superiors, but some kind of belief, or trust, in Christ and in His redeeming power. Even though this doctrine was often distorted, it was probably never distorted quite so generally, and with quite such fatal results, as the doctrine of the Holy Communion in the Latin Church.

(4) The introduction of modern hymns into Christian worship. Some few of these, written in the eighteenth century, as truly deserve the epithet "inspired" as some of the "Psalms of David"; and others had, at least, the merit of enabling worshippers from year to year to find fresh and sincere expression for their most sacred thoughts. But the great permanent gain was,

that this innovation broke the old conservative tradition of rejecting all forms of prayer and praise not sanctioned by ecclesiastical authorities, and prepared the way for "prophesyings" authorized irregularly by the spirit of each generation.

§ 2

But the greatest of all the gains in the Reformed Churches was the renewal of the study of the Scriptures by the people at large.

i That it was not an unmixed blessing has been stated above. It led to errors of interpretation, religious presumptuousness, restless sectarianism, extravagance in theory, eccentricity (and sometimes immorality) in practice.

But it upheaved the minds of the masses to a position where they could better contemplate the possibility of a future when all would know the Lord, from the least to the greatest. Grant that they often perverted the Bible to a mere book of rules, taking, for example, as a precedent for modern warfare, the action of Joshua towards the kings of Canaan: yet, when they did this, the New Testament could be brought to bear against them. They had to "prove," and to hear others "prove," from Scripture. Discussion, with all its evils, was, on the whole, good. A Christian Themistocles was always entitled to say "Hear, before striking"; and sometimes (though not often at first) "hearing" prevented "striking."

At first, of course, the heroes of the Bible were

English to the English, German to the Germans. Bible reading did not make either nation cosmopolitan. But, in time, the study of Hebrew, of Greek, of Greek thought, and of history—all of which had to be undertaken for the purposes of Biblical interpretation—could not but open men's minds, widen their horizons, convince them of past ignorance, and tinge them with modesty by forcing them to discern new possibilities of knowledge.

ii Moreover, even the errors of the Reformation had a saving flavour of enthusiasm and contained the promise of virtues. Although it was not a birth into perfection, it was a new birth, a birth into something that was real life, not death under the guise of life.

It is because we do not appreciate the immense difference between first-hand and second-hand conviction, that we fail to recognize the reason for the influence exerted by the study of the Scriptures on the national character in the sixteenth century, when, as Erasmus tells us, the shopmen and the artisans were thumbing and discussing among one another the Epistles of St. Paul. Comparing it with the indifference of our days, we marvel and can find no explanation. But the explanation is to be found in the outrush of the human mind when suddenly released from the imprisonment of dogma and allowed to breathe the fresh air of natural truth. These men would not have spent time, pains, and enthusiasm on the Thirty-nine Articles or the Tridentine Decrees. But they were not droning over "dogmas" but forming "convictions"—face to face, spirit to spirit, with the Apostle of the Gentiles,

striving to take in his thoughts. For indeed the Pauline letters pre-eminently exemplify the great advantage of Scriptural over dogmatic teaching. They speak in such "divers portions" and in such "divers manners" that they do not easily adapt themselves to dogmatic purposes. They have been thus adapted; but the consequences have been disastrous. Pauline doctrine is like the living water, to be taken from the stream itself. Stored up in cisterns, it spoils.

§ 3

The time will come when, in face of the manifest weakness of the evidence for some of the historical facts in Scripture, we shall awaken to the strength of its spiritual cogency, and especially to that of St. Paul's Epistles. For letters are not like histories. A good book is described by Milton as the precious blood of a master-spirit treasured up unto a life to come. And letters are among the most lifelike of good books, often best fitted to introduce the master-spirit into our hearts and to blend his life with ours.

i Tennyson's In Memoriam[1] affords an illustration of this which would well repay study. The poet has been musing on his dead friend, bidding him "come back," not at night, but in the joy of spring, or in the brightness of summer—

> "beauteous in thine after form
> And like a finer light in light."

[1] § 89–§ 93.

He then reflects that, even if he did see such a vision, he might count it as "but the canker of the brain." Even if the vision were accompanied by predictions that were subsequently verified by results, he might deem them nothing but "spiritual presentiments."

The manifestation, then, cannot be one of *sight*. "I shall not *see* thee," he exclaims. But what if there could be a manifestation by means of *feeling*, spiritual tangibility, contact between soul and soul?

> "No visual shade of some one lost,
> But he, the Spirit himself, may come
> Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
> Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost."

He utters the wish that this invisible Being may "descend and touch and enter," and that his own spirit may "feel" the contact. But a reaction follows, arising from a sense that the man who would hold even "an hour's communion with the dead" must enjoy a peace and faith not possible when "the heart is full of din."

Then comes a description of a calm summer's evening, and the slow fall of night, while he and the circle of his friends sit round the table in the garden, with songs and social talk, till one by one they withdraw and light after light goes out and he is left alone. A "hunger" seizes his heart and he reads the story of his past friendship in "the noble letters of the dead":

> "So word by word and line by line
> The dead man touch'd me from the past,
> And all at once it seem'd at last
> His living soul was flash'd on mine,

> And mine in his was wound, and whirl'd
> About empyreal heights of thought,
> And came on that which is, and caught
> The deep pulsations of the world."

Some parts of this description may be hard for us to realize or even apprehend. Nevertheless, we shall do well to keep it before us. For it is the most inspired and inspiring conjecture that has been given in the nineteenth century of the manner in which one spirit may influence another through written words. It applies to art and science as well as to the moral and spiritual sphere: but, in particular, besides directly helping us to appreciate the influence of St. Paul on his readers, it may indirectly help us to apprehend the spiritual power underlying the visual and audible manifestations by which Jesus "touched" St. Paul and the other Apostles, and, through them, Christendom—manifestations, as we contend, unique, but in accordance with the laws of nature.

ii But some may say, "All this 'touching,' 'entering,' and 'flashing' is only metaphor. Savages eat an enemy in order to appropriate his good qualities, and they mix their blood with that of a friend in order to unite wills. So Milton speaks of a good book as 'the life-blood' of its author, and Tennyson of a dead friend as 'touching' the survivor through the reading of letters. But the notions of the savages and the phrases of the poets are all metaphors and false. If Hallam had risen from the grave and had manifested himself visibly to Tennyson, that would have been a stupendous truth; if tangibly, more stupendous still."

Surely such language, though superficially plausible, involves some confusion of thought. *All language was originally metaphor.* The question is, whether metaphor is used to convey truth or falsehood, and, if truth, to convey it with the least alloy of falsehood. We know that an enemy's qualities cannot be appropriated by eating him, but that a book can put something of the author's thought, vigour, energy, and what we call "life," into its readers. Suppose the poet had told us that he had seen his dead friend with his eyes, had heard his voice, and had even felt the pressure of his warm hand as he passed back again to the eternal silence, having uttered nothing more than commonplace or trivial words—nothing of depth, nothing of revelation, nothing even to betoken a more than ordinary sympathy. What would have been the result? Would it have been more profitable, more permanent, more spiritually real, for us and for posterity, than the non-visual "vision"? Would it have given us any contact with "that which *is*"? On the contrary, it would have set us arguing and wrangling about "that which *seems*." We should have been brought no nearer to "the deep pulsations of the world." From such an answer out of the grave we should have taken nothing, because of its apparent purposelessness. Manifestations through visions and voices, when made the medium of spiritual revelation, may be most helpful: but the former, without the latter, do but suggest that our frail mortality is liable to "canker of the brain."

§ 4

Appeal to Scriptures was but one among many causes that brought about toleration. The Reformers began by persecuting one another, as well as the Romanists, in accordance with established laws. But being now in a less ecclesiastical atmosphere, more accustomed to religious discussion, more open to the influences of home, nature, and the world, they gradually found the duty of persecuting more and more distasteful. This made them more ready to acknowledge that no law, short of extermination, would work. Then they ceased to execute the old laws. Finally they abrogated them.

But as soon as they ceased to punish a man, say, for denying the divinity of Christ, or the existence of a God, they were confronted with the following question: "You prevent men by force from murdering one another's bodies; why are you no longer to prevent men from murdering one another's souls by teaching Socinianism or Atheism?" In answer, they were forced to confess, either that society was not intended by God to prevent men by force from murdering one another's souls, or else that a man might deny the divinity of Christ, or the existence of God, and yet be saved.

It was useless for them to set up the defence, "We ought to prevent soul-murder if we could, but we cannot," or "Coercion does not turn a Socinian into a Trinitarian." The ecclesiastical answer was obvious, "You ought not to play at persecution but to practise coercion, or else, prevention. If a Socinian is coerced in mind as well as in act to accept Trinitarianism, so

much the better. If he is not, yet he is none the worse (since he was damned before), and others are the better. A Socinian, when forced to recant, is almost as much incapacitated as a Socinian dead (and death should be the alternative), for the purpose of converting others to Socinianism. If you let a Socinian father live, you are an accomplice in the murder of the souls of his innocent children. You could prevent it, but you will not."

Being, therefore, absolutely forced to assent to one of the two propositions above-mentioned, a great majority of the successors of the Reformers, in the end, practically (though not openly) assented to the latter, viz. that a man may deny any religious dogma and yet be saved. And so it has come to pass that—after many generations of religious persecution, first in severer, then in milder forms—the members of the Reformed Churches are now more ready to call on the State to punish a man for beating his wife, or starving his children, or stifling his work-people in bad air, or overworking his horse, than for denying the divinity of Christ.

§ 5

Toleration is morally good or bad according to its motive.

i No man ought to tolerate evil, if he can suppress it without causing greater evil. It is the curse of some religions that they bind the consciences of their adherents to be intolerant. No one, whether Romanist

or Protestant, who is certain that a Unitarian is "damned," is justified in allowing Unitarian parents to exist, and the same logic forbids him to spare "Jews, Turks, and infidels."

In the Reformed Churches, toleration has probably been largely of a mixed nature. Statesmen and ecclesiastics have sometimes refrained from persecuting because they wished to gain some temporal advantage for Church or State. In such cases, they have been doing evil that good might come: they have been placing worldly interests above the spiritual interests of unbelievers.

ii But there is another kind of toleration gradually coming to the front, proceeding, not from slackness of faith or confusion of thought, but from a clear perception of the teaching of the divine Word speaking to us "in divers portions and in divers manners." Reverencing this, and learning through experience, through social intercourse, through knowledge of the past, and through a faith in a God with whom "all things are possible," the most fervid believer in Christ's divine nature becomes insensibly convinced, with a conviction proportioned to his fervour, that he may learn from the processes of the Eternal Word, incarnate and pre-incarnate, wiser ways and apter methods of turning mankind toward the light of Christian truth, than racking, thumbscrewing, or burning; and that, in any case, these ways are abominable in His sight.

Such tolerance as this is no less a blessing, both to the Church and to the world, than intolerance is a curse. Intolerance sends the persecutor home from the

martyr's stake, either more callous to God's teaching through human nature, or else more open to flashes of doubt suggesting that his own faith may be a lie and the sufferer's may be the truth. Intolerance blinds our eyes to spiritual excellence in those from whom we differ; and, by making us trust in forcible means for propagating our religion, it causes us to trust in force while distrusting the power of truth, and to throw on others the blame that we ought often to throw on ourselves and on our failure to practise what we preach.

But tolerance that springs from love, trust, and reverence for truth, instead of goading us to torture our brother into the acceptance of this or that dogma, leads us continually to ask ourselves, "How did I attain this or that helpful conviction, and what can I do to help my neighbour to attain it? What am I doing, or have I done, to bar him from it? How can I best set forth the truth so that he and all the world may flee to it as a refuge from all evil?" Such a consistent, logical, and enthusiastic tolerance as this fills intolerant unbelievers with wonder, and, in the end, with reluctant respect, when they are forced to say, "These men would die for their religion; yet they would not, even if they could, compel us or bribe us to adopt it. How they must trust what they call the truth!" To them, therefore, it is a blessing, coming as a preparation to receive the truth. But it is also "twice-blest," being even more manifestly a blessing to believers. A Church tolerant in this spirit is founded on the Rock of Love and Truth, and the gates of falsehood and force shall not prevail against it.

CHAPTER III

THE LAW OF THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST

1 Its applicability

§ 1

THE worship of Christ in the Spirit and not in the flesh should widen and deepen our views of other things besides religion; modifying our opinions about every business of life, political, social, domestic; helping us to discern the same laws in the Great World and the Little World, and to note everywhere cause producing effect, confident that, though effects may come slowly, they come in the end.

i Take, for example, the present[1] relations between Ireland and England. What reasonable Christian—whether he calls himself Unionist or Home-ruler—will feel surprise that misgovernment has resulted in antipathy, and in a retribution that has now fallen on the descendants of those who misgoverned? On the other hand, ought we to infer that, because a nation

[1] Written in 1893 (see Preface).

has been for some centuries at discord with itself and then for some centuries under bad government, therefore the remedy is to concede at once whatever the numerical majority in that nation may desire? After ill-treating a ward up to the age of sixteen, do we make him amends by then suddenly treating him as if he had reached the age of twenty-one? And, whatever our statesmen may do, is it not childish to hope to undo in a few years, by any doing, evils (not altogether of our causing) that have lasted for centuries?

ii So, too, as regards the relations between class and class in the same nation. Worshippers of the Spirit will ever have before them the corporate unity of the nation as a living body, recognizing more keenly than others that no class or individual can suffer without the ultimate suffering of the rest. We all "know" this. But with a very large number it is a "dogma." With Christians it should be a conviction, a part of their religion, the religion of the Spirit of Christ.

The religion of Jesus, as the Son of man, will teach us that nothing can set these relations right except His Spirit, the Spirit of self-sacrifice and good-will. But, in addition to this, the religion of Christ, as the Eternal Word, through whom the universe was made, will teach us that there are means of helping, and means of thwarting, the influence of the Spirit, and that these means need to be studied in history and experience.

iii Towards physical pain and mental suffering the Christian attitude will be two-fold.

We believe that men must expect suffering; that human sorrows, as well as joys, must be keener than those of irrational animals; and that pain has been subordinated by God to the development of sympathy, righteousness, peace, and ultimate joy. Yet any evil affecting one class alone, and tolerated by the rest without an effort to remove it, is known by experience to become a "stumbling-block" or "offence" to that class, and a definite obstacle to Christian faith. And for the individual, too, it is better to be a pessimist than to be an optimist who bears with resignation all sufferings except his own.

Moreover, the records of Christ's life shew that He regarded pain and disease, in themselves, as evils; and it implies a misunderstanding of Christianity to say that "it is not intended to make men happier but only better." Even without any expectation of directly making men better (except so far as we vaguely feel that a certain sort of happiness has some connection with goodness) we both make others better and become better ourselves by striving sympathetically to make others happier.

§ 2

The man who believes in the Spirit of Christ will have a strong sense of the forces of nature in philanthropic action as well as in scientific experiment. This will no more lead him to despair than belief in Law leads the man of science to despair; but it will make him sane, deliberate, steadfast, open-eyed, unprejudiced. It will free him from many fallacies (especially the

fallacies of words) and from the snare that besets those who expect immediate gratitude, if not as a reward of their action, at least as a test of its wisdom.

i For example, the mere name of socialism will not deter him from trying social experiments. Yet he will give weight to the failures of socialism, first at Jerusalem in St. Paul's days and recently in many modern experiments. The danger, also, will always be present to his mind, of suppressing the Spirit of God and its "grace," by reducing all men to one level and by eliminating those differences of circumstance which favour the development of different "gifts"—as each flower in a wood differentiates itself under the influence of environment.

ii On the other hand, he will remember that, for some centuries, modern law and order have been combining to increase the differences of wealth in what may be fairly called an artificial way. In the days when bankers were few or non-existent, and when the bulk of wealth consisted of land and cattle or the gold in one's house, accumulation was not so easy, safe, and attractive as in present times, when a score of mediæval fortunes can be safely held by one man in investments, and when the value of an estate can be transmitted in a cheque or spent on countless æsthetic and intellectual enjoyments before unknown.

Reasonably, therefore, men may ask themselves whether a Christian country may not go some way further in increasing the burdens of the owners of large fortunes:—not with the view of punishing the accumu-

lation of wealth, but with the view of proportioning the fiscal burdens of wealth to its increased advantages and carrying out Nature's general "law of compensation." The inducement for rich men to save being greater, we need not, perhaps, fear to increase the taxation of the rich somewhat beyond the present limits.

Again, might we not have supposed that, when the time and the labour needed for production were greatly diminished by the introduction of machinery, the leisure of mankind as a whole, and, in some degree, that of the workman, would be increased—and all the more since labour has become less varied and more mechanical, so that the workman is in more need of variety? But as this has not always resulted, at least to the extent that might have been fairly anticipated, is not a reasonable case made out that Christian employers and labourers should combine, or else, if that is found inconvenient, that a Christian country, or (with more probability of success, perhaps) Christian countries, should do for them what they, without such joint action, may be unable to do for themselves, that is to say, go further in the direction in which we have already gone, of shortening the hours of labour where they are still excessive?

§ 3

Yet, in deciding such questions as these, the free Spirit that "bloweth where it listeth" will always remind us that we are to be taught by what "works," and that the more men who are not in patent need of

help can be let alone, the better it is for them, both individually and collectively.

Both in Rome and in Athens, those times are said to have been best when "the public revenue was large and private fortunes small." But this was so, not in any large measure because of graduated taxation, but because (apart from the fact that there were fewer means of accumulating wealth) men's attention was engrossed, to a greater extent than at present, by matters of public interest. This suggests to us our remedy. Then, and then alone, will the excessive accumulation of wealth be effectually prevented, when society at large (the moderately poor as well as the rich) is too much absorbed in matters of public interest to concentrate its attention on money-making.

It is alleged that art flourishes on the superfluity of a small and very wealthy class; but it is conceivable that the highest art might flourish far more when "the public revenue" became "large" and "private fortunes small" if art at the same time became "a matter of public interest."

There is already a tendency against the excessive accumulation of wealth, but it is among the artisans rather than among the middle or higher classes. The action of trades unions is sometimes unreasonable, unfair, mis-directed, and calculated to do harm to their own cause; but there is a breath of the Christian Spirit in the feeling that induces some of the abler artisans to prefer to remain in, and to raise, their own order, rather than to rise out of it into exceptional wealth. The working hours of artisans are not infrequently contrasted with those of some among the professional classes, to the

credit of the latter as being more hard-working: and the contrast is sometimes just. But, on the other hand, do not the artisans sometimes set a good example to many leading men in almost all our professions, who are pining to "possess their souls," but cannot induce themselves to sacrifice some of their prospective wealth for leisure, even when the want of leisure threatens to convert work into drudgery?

2 Its alleged failure

§ 1

There prevails at present a dissatisfaction with our social and religious conditions; and some point to this as a proof that "Christianity has failed."

i But this very uneasiness, so far as it arises from contrasting our actualities with the ideal suggested by Christ's Spirit and from our condemning the former, is a proof that (however much certain forms of Christianity may have failed) the Spirit of Christ has *not* wholly failed.

We are pronouncing His judgment on ourselves and confessing its justice; and what is this but the most divine kind of "judgment"? It is also the necessary preliminary to deliverance. We cannot be delivered from our evils till we feel them. Christ, then, may be "judging" us for our good.

ii Those who wish to demonstrate the "practical failure of Christianity" point, not unreasonably, to its effect on the free negroes in the West Indies and in the United States; and some openly affirm that it was a mistake ever to give freedom to the blacks. Such beliefs have found a bold expression in the thesis that we ought to use the Arabs in Africa as our "Goorkhas" for the purpose of suppressing or enslaving the native races there. "We are going against nature," it is said, "in intervening for those whom nature intends to go to the wall."

Well, we are going against nature in intervening (by means of hospitals and poor-rates) to prevent the sick and poor from "going to the wall." Yet we intervene. We have shown above that it is "natural" for civilized man to reverse, in this respect, the order of things that is "natural" for beasts. As regards the emancipated negroes, it may be that their emancipation was accompanied by errors of judgment. But even if there were no errors, even if it was effected in the wisest possible way, it was sure to be followed by grave evils. Many generations may be needed before the Spirit of Christ can undo what the spirit of selfishness has done. In such circumstances every remedy, even the wisest, may be described as productive of evil. So, too, may the knife of the surgeon. Even to those to whom "the Spirit of Christ" may mean nothing, it must be surely intelligible that a bad external policy sooner or later produces its bad effect on internal relations between class and class, on the home, and on the individual; that any civilized slave-owning nation contains in itself the seeds of corruption; and that a nation of

"Christian" slave owners is doomed to a specially speedy destruction, because of the flagrant contrast between its practice and theory of morality.

§ 2

These thoughts bear on our dealings with foreign nations. Christians are forced—we must confess it—to a compromise between "Peace under all circumstances" and "War whenever there is anything to be got by it." Some condemn us for not adopting the former policy. Others bid us boldly avow the latter, asserting that there is "no room for Christianity in politics."

i As to the former, we may ask those who condemn all war on the ground of its being "against the Sermon on the Mount," whether they are prepared to be consistent; to go the same lengths as the Quakers in old days; to give to every one that asks them; to turn the left cheek to the man who has smitten the right; and never to resist a bully, a thief, or a burglar. Why will they not go these lengths? Because they find that such conduct is not the best for society or for themselves. Then if in these cases they use their judgment in opposition to the letter of Christ's command, they cannot reasonably blame us—not, at least, on the ground of our being "against the Sermon on the Mount"—for doing the same.

ii Similarly, as to the latter, we may ask those who justify violence between nations "whenever there is anything to be got by it," whether they are prepared to

advocate violence between individuals in the same circumstances. Almost all would shrink from the material mischief, if not from the moral deterioration, resulting to society from the general adoption of such a maxim. "It would not *work*," they would say. Neither would their policy "work." We advocate what "works." There are signs already, as has been shewn, sufficient to make a righteous nation trust that righteousness will in the end be found nationally expedient. Our business is, in matters of peace and war alike, to do what seems best for all under the present circumstances, while looking forward to, and doing our best to accelerate, a time when the best will be better than it is at present.

iii Such an attitude as this is neither that of a blind optimism nor that of faithlessness, but that of reasonable and hopeful anticipation.

Seeing that in man Nature has already gone far in reversing the irrational law that "Might is right," we believe that Nature will ultimately go further still, and that a time will come when international law will have the same force over nations that national law already has over individuals. But we believe that this time will not come except as the effect of causes. One of the causes may be the grievous pressure of protracted warlike preparations. Another may be a general European war followed by such consequences as may make war hateful beyond our present conception.

But these and other external forces can only be secondary causes. Nor can European courts of arbitration, backed by European armies (though they may

do much) be relied on always to succeed, while national courts of justice, backed by national police, often fail. War may be diminished by such means; but it will not utterly cease until the nations awaken to a sense of kinship outraged by conflict, dropping the sword with an exclamation like that in the play, "Brother, brother, we have both been wrong!" To quicken such a spirit as this is beyond the power of the tax-gatherer or the soldier. There must come into the hearts of men, along with a cosmopolitan Christianity, a sense of loyalty to the Cosmopolis, the great World City in which the Word of God has placed the nations to be members of one body, living to His glory. This, and this alone, can be the permanent antidote against greedy combativeness in nations, as against greedy competitiveness in individuals. No burdens of taxes, no horrors of war, can ever even prepare the way for such a revolution as this, unless they are recognized as chastening retributions, punishing us for having ignored or disobeyed, and helping us to know and obey, the Law of the Spirit of Christ.

This is what we must hope, pray, and work for, confident that it is in accord with the law of the development of our nature. Some, indeed, deny this. "It is against nature," they say: "peace is a dream: man will always be a fighting animal." To these we reply, "So he will: but there will always be plenty to fight against." The "enemies" of the Psalmist will exist for ages, but the various ages will give them various shapes. Our present Moab is drunkenness, our Edom is impurity; and, even when these are partially subjugated, there will remain, behind them, the vaster

empires of Assyria, the despotism of force, and Babylon, the despotism of self. As long as the Christian faith endures, it will be a "victory," and will presuppose conflict with some enemy of Christ, that is to say, some enemy of the brotherhood of Man.

§ 3

Some forms of what we call the faithlessness of the present day, if analysed, will be found to involve a kind of maimed and negative worship. They shew men's minds protesting against what they deem to be false or unrighteous in popular Christianity. Surely such a protest often indicates that they themselves have love and reverence for truth and righteousness. And this is worship, though deficient in the element of faith.

It is, of course, depressing to see a number of good men rejecting Christianity as false because a multitude of other good men have identified it with a mass of alleged historical facts, which the former cannot accept as true; while a much larger number of average people make this an excuse for not troubling themselves about religion at all, because "the experts do not agree among themselves"; or else, while theoretically accepting it, practically reject it as an influence on their lives, because they "live in the present, and miracles belong to the past." But is not the present condition of things at least better and more promising than one in which atheism, heterodoxy, and non-attendance at the Eucharist, were punishable by law? Is not the standard of faith in spiritual truth now higher, though the faith in the historical facts of the New Testament

has been, and is likely to be, diminished? And, in proportion as spiritual progress is found to go hand in hand with scrupulous criticism, may we not hope that Christians will learn to insist less upon the letter of Scripture, because they will have found that such insistence does not "work"—that is to say, it does not tend to God's glory, inasmuch as it does not tend to the moral and spiritual development of men?

i Once grasp the meaning of true worship, and we shall be better able to understand with how different an eye from ours the All-seeing may regard the rise and decline of Churches, and the apparent reflux and afflux of Christianity. If it was the will of the Father that His Son should bring into the world Good News of a love that casts out fear, what must have been the feelings of His angels who, watching the influence of this mysterious Gospel, have beheld dread still predominant—or even more dominant than ever, if modern critics have justly spoken of "the largely increased fear of death caused by Christianity"! In some Christian ages, it has not been over men's irreligion, but over their religion, that there has been sorrow in heaven.

Tertullian,[1] attacking the Marcionites for saying that a good God ought not to be the object of fear, assumes that those whom he is addressing, and presumably all Christians, would indulge every passion to the utmost if they were not restrained by the "fear" of God. Some of his strictures are just. He is right in attacking the conception of a God indifferent or indulgent to

[1] Against Marcion, i. 28.

unrighteousness. But he is radically wrong in supposing that we "fear" God merely because of His might and because He can chastise. And he wrongly distinguishes between our love for God as [1] dutiful sons and our fear of His "power"; and again, between our love for the Lord's [2] kindness and our fear of His [3] "disciplinary attributes." If, he says, God is not to be feared, why do you not frequent the circus, the blood-thirsty arena, the lascivious theatre, nay, why not deny your faith under pressure from the magistrate? It does not seem to occur to him that loyalty to God as the Father may more effectually prevent Christians from doing these things than fear of His punishments. How much more of spiritual truth is there in those suggestive words of Tennyson which describe how "reverence" for a friend's "blame" (without the least thought of his "power") induces us to strive for his "applause," or in the above-quoted utterance from the Psalms, "There is *mercy* with thee, *therefore* thou shalt be *feared*"!

ii We know something about God's end and object, we know very little about His reasons for choosing this or that means and process. Still less do we know about what we must call—to speak in all reverence but in all honesty too, as imperfect creatures, conscious of half-knowledge, but conscious also of our duty to say what we feel to be the nearest approximation to truth—God's "difficulties," "obstacles," or "adversaries." It may be that, in human as in non-human nature, He takes (what we should call) no account of quantity as compared with quality. To some, the Ten

[1] Pietatem. [2] Humanitatem. [3] Disciplinam.

Tribes in captivity, and the wanderers during the forty years in the wilderness, may seem to point this moral, and indeed to have existed only to point this moral—"ensamples" to posterity, profitless for themselves; and there may be need of a faith in something beyond our present conception of individual and national identity, and in something beyond the limits of that single span's breadth of life which we at present (perhaps too confidently) assign to each human soul, if we are to contemplate God's loving wisdom with a logical satisfaction of the brain, in any degree approaching the moral and spiritual fervour with which we recognize it in our hearts.

Concerning such details, we know nothing, though we may believe much. But this one truth—so overwhelming is the testimony for a Christian believer—we may be said to "know," that only that which is righteous is "that which *is*"; and that, whether in Unitarian or Trinitarian, in Romanist or Protestant, in Mohammedan, Buddhist or Christian, one momentary thrill of loving and spontaneous faith in which a single heart goes forth to do spontaneous homage to righteousness, is, in God's eyes, eternal and divine, as compared with the utmost intensity of mere dread of His power, though it last whole centuries and pervade whole Churches and nations that call themselves by the name of Christ, yet "teach as doctrines the commandments of men."

APPENDIX

MODERN PRAYER AND WORSHIP

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1 Prayer and Preparation

§ 1

In all the records about the doctrine of Christ, nothing is more certain than that He taught us to begin our prayers with "Our Father." Shall we not do well sometimes—and particularly on occasions of competition and when we are in any special danger of egotism—to pause on the word "our," trying to make a moment's panorama of its meaning, including the whole world, and emphasizing "our," and not proceeding further till we have thus reminded ourselves that others, opposed to us, or competing with us, may at this very moment be offering up the same prayer?

i Private prayers should represent our private wishes, which naturally turn on those who are near to us. But besides including a bead-roll of friends, ought we not to accustom ourselves to include "Church," "world," and "country"?

ii Prayer for the living should not cease when they have ceased to live on earth. By continuing it, we help to make the next life continuous with this; we remind ourselves forcibly of past blessings, and sometimes of present and future duties, which give a point and meaning to our general prayer for deliverance from sin.

Not, of course, that we should pray for others in order to (indirectly) pray for ourselves. That prayer for others tends to our own good is only to be taken as a proof that it "works," that is to say, that God intends us thus to pray. As to the words, we must pray as we feel, and as we should wish that others should pray for us if we were one with the person prayed for. Fixity of form should, perhaps, be at first avoided, till, after experience—it may be long experience—the Holy Spirit teaches us exactly what to feel and to say. No general rule can be laid down, except that, for the dead, as for ourselves, we must not deprecate God's justice, or ask Him to spare us or them any chastisement that He may deem needful to purify us for His presence.

In all prayer, the right rule is to pray for whatever we feel we need. But sometimes what we felt we "needed" before we began to pray, we cease to "need" when we draw closer to God in prayer. To us, as to the Apostle, the answer may come, "My grace is sufficient for thee." By prayer we learn the right form of prayer for some things, and the duty of giving up prayer for other things.

iii Systematic confession to a priest has been discarded by our English Church Reformers, and rightly,

because it has not "worked." Yet for want of some substitute, the soul sometimes pines and is in danger of drying up. Wesleyan class-meetings, though not without their dangers, may partly meet such a want. In the Church of England we are probably too reserved in talking privately about religion. Those are fortunate who have a friend to whom they can talk or write freely and fully whenever they feel moved to do so. Such confidences sometimes come as close to a confession of sins as a man with self-respect feels able to come.

§ 2

Asceticism originally meant "training," as a boxer or runner "trains." In this sense it can be practised quietly and naturally without any sense of merit. As the standard of comfort rises, we ought, perhaps, to be more alive to the need of keeping ourselves from becoming shackled, if not enslaved, by comforts which we too easily learn to look on as necessities. Then, but not otherwise, is asceticism good, when it is used, with due regard to health and vigour, for the purpose of keeping ourselves ready for useful action.

Some in the Church of England, as well as in that of Rome, are disposed to practise asceticism simply because they believe it to be enjoined by what they regard as lawful authority. If they so believe, they are bound so to act; but unless they can obey authority intelligently, seeing the purpose of this precept and perceiving that it is for the common good, they are, so far, under the Law and not under Grace.

Hurrell Froude, the friend of John Henry Newman,

gave up private asceticism, as tending to presumption when not practised in accordance with the prescriptions of the Church. But, whether prescribed by others or not, any kind of asceticism tends to presumption if we suppose that it is a merit, or to superstition if we fancy that it propitiates God. God has revealed Himself as an enemy to all pain except that which is made useful to others or endured for others.

§ 3

Worship is love, trust, and reverence. Whatever, then, impairs any one of these elements, makes us, by so much, less capable of worship.

It is a truism that the habit of loving and trusting *men* leads us to love and trust God; but it is not so well recognized that we are disqualified from reverencing Him by want of reverence for *things* "pure, true, noble, lovely, of good report."

Some of the literature of the present day tends a little to irreverence. The nature and attributes of God, when regarded as our Father in Christ, assume a kind of domestic sanctity which ought to make us reluctant to talk copiously about them, still more to discuss them in a controversial temper; yet they are sometimes gladiatorially championed or assailed by men who seem to think so much of style, point, and petty controversial victories, that they give the impression of being either only half in earnest, or only half awake to the meaning of what they are quarrelling about.

Parody in these days is carried to excess. The

noblest poems of our secular literature ought to be as sacred to the parodist as many parts of the Bible itself. Who would venture thus to exercise a mere verbal wit on the Song of Songs? But we ought much more easily to pardon an atheist for parodying that not obviously spiritual and not generally edifying work than a Christian for parodying Milton's sonnet on his blindness, or Tennyson's "This truth came borne with bier and pall." A cynical atheist or cynical infidel may be pardoned if he roams contemptuously through the realm of literature, like an Ishmael through the Promised Land, from Dan to Beersheba, counting all barren: but, to one who worships the incarnate Word of God, the choicest spiritual words of God's Christian children should come almost as the very utterances of Christ from heaven, hardly less sacred than His utterances on earth.

2 Public Worship and Preparation

§ 1

If public worship should be the natural expression of religious feeling, mostly taking shape in words, and if the words by which all feeling is expressed vary in each generation, it follows that forms of worship helpful and natural for one century may become increasingly unnatural and harmful for the next. The problem is, how to prevent public united prayer (on which Christ laid so much stress) from becoming archaic and

formal on the one hand, or eccentric and irreverent on the other.

i While retaining the Holy Communion as the centre of all Christian worship, and while rejecting no symbolism, new or old, that may usefully impress upon the congregation the reality of Christ's sacrifice for men, might we not do more to satisfy men's aspirations after some natural expression of the religious emotions? Prayers in modern prose are probably more difficult to compose well than hymns or psalms; yet they appear to be almost necessary for some to whom (not having been early habituated to it) the language of our Prayer-Book is becoming, in parts, more and more antiquated and expressionless.

Moreover, apart from archaism, the Anglican Prayer-Book suffers from grave defects and disproportions. How great a stress does it lay on the omnipotence of God as compared with the stress laid by Christ or the Apostles on God's love and righteousness (or justice)! How small a place is assigned to expressions of thanks-giving! And in the numerous prayers for rest, quiet, and preservation from enemies, is there not an excessive amplitude and iteration, natural for the Psalmists of Israel and for the saints of the Middle Ages, but hardly so profitable now when we are comparatively free from external evils, and stand in more danger from luxury, self-deceit, indifference to truth, indifference to cause and effect, and indifference to the sorrows of others. Our great need is, in the best sense of the term, public spirit; our great danger is selfishness. But the latter word is not so much as mentioned in the Prayer-Book.

Yet how many are there who now pray unprofitably, because meaninglessly, for deliverance from "the world, the flesh, and the devil," who might be roused at once to a new and true sense of their spiritual condition if the Litany startled them with the words, "From selfishness, the angel of Satan, good Lord deliver us"!

In some respects, and especially in the greater stress laid on thanksgiving, the Jewish Prayer-Book might be imitated with advantage by Christians.

ii The composition of good modern prayers would be stimulated if prayer-meetings were not excluded from Anglican Churches in neighbourhoods where they met a want. From such meetings, if the laity were encouraged to take their part in praying or "prophesying," there might spring utterances of conviction, which, by commending themselves to many hearts and consciences, would be shewn to be spiritually natural and spontaneous. By degrees, the best of such prayers, coming to the front in our Churches, and introduced in appendices to hymn-books as prose hymns or psalms, might be used without special authority and without the need of altering the Prayer-Book.

iii Prayers cannot be written to order, any more than poems. This is sufficiently shewn by most modern official Anglican prayers composed for special purposes. Sometimes they run into blank verse.[1] Sometimes they consist of Biblical or Prayer-Book "tags," with here and

[1] A special fault of *modern* prayers. The Prayer-Book and the Authorized Version of the Bible often drop into whole or partial hexameters; but that is much less objectionable than blank verse.

there a drop into modern bathos. Almost always they betoken the fatal disadvantages (apparent throughout the Revised Version of the New Testament) of a training that has made the English language a step-mother (in comparison with Latin and Greek) to those educated in our public schools and Universities.

iv While we retain the high ritual of the Holy Communion—amplified rather than curtailed, and illustrated with such musical and hymnal aids as may be adapted to the several congregations—we ought (as has been suggested more fully above) to try to learn something from the religious sociality of the Nonconformists. Rich symbolism, and occasional spontaneous interchange of spiritual convictions, far from being incompatible, are improved by being combined; the former becomes more spiritual and reasonable, the latter more sober, chastened, and profound.

§ 2

A series of "readings from the Bible" should be published for the use of family worship. In this, the New Testament should contain the text of the Authorized Version largely corrected by the Revised. Much of the Old Testament should be omitted: for example, the whole of the Song of Songs, and all but seventeen verses of Ecclesiastes. A short explanatory title should be prefixed to each "reading."

i Such a series should contain several extracts from Ecclesiasticus, and a few from The Wisdom of Solomon,

mainly because of their intrinsic excellence, but partly as a protest against the notion that any book in the Hebrew Bible is necessarily better than any book in the Greek Bible that may not be included in the Hebrew.

The Psalms, as a whole, should be included in these readings. But two or three "passages of execration" should be omitted, and a good many of the sayings that bear on "enemies." It should also be explained in a general preface to the Psalter that whenever, after each Psalm, we repeat "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," we thereby confess that the Psalms have no right meaning for us until we have turned the fleshly "enemies" of "David" into the spiritual "enemies" of Christ.

In course of time, if public opinion became ripe for the innovation, such a series of "Readings" should receive a short Appendix containing a few of the finest prose "prophesyings" of English writers.

§ 3

It is impossible—without a sense of unreality amounting, in some, to something like hypocrisy—to revive obsolete Saints' days, many of which commemorate (virtually) names without persons.

But in the readiness with which "Harvest Festivals" have been introduced both among Churchmen and Nonconformists, we see a tendency of which we should avail ourselves.

The Harvest brings Nature before us as a witness to the Law of Judgment, dividing the wheat from the tares

and the chaff, and indicating that the far-off future will be to the present as the fruit is to the seed. Easter, with its now established practice of decorating churches with the flowers of spring, is already half accepted as a festival commemorating the resurrection of Nature as well as that of Christ. The feast of Christmas, coming as a preparation for the beginning of the year, should represent for us the manifestation of the Word in the cradle of Creation as well as in the manger of Bethlehem. Whit Sunday and Trinity Sunday, as festivals of summer, might be used to bring closer to the minds of the masses the thought of the Sun of Righteousness as the central Power, Light, and Life, of the spiritual Universe.

When the "Law" of the Spirit of Christ supplants the "Law" of the Church and the "Law" of the Scriptures, "Sunday-school lessons" will assume a new shape. Even at present, the more cultivated teachers in our Sunday Schools teach other things besides the Bible under the plea of "interesting" the children or "keeping them quiet." But hereafter it will be openly recognized that descriptions of the latent processes of non-human Nature, the rise and fall of nations, the making and marring of a human character, may contain revelations of the working of the Eternal Word. Taught in the Spirit of Christ, these subjects may be made truly "Christian."

§ 4

This leads us to consider whether—if not in the Churches, at least under the shadow of the Church—

more might be done to satisfy, and to regulate with the view of satisfying, the craving of the young for pleasurable emotion. There are arguments for and against it. On the one hand, how can what is called "pleasure"—as distinct from happiness, peace, blessedness, the sense of harmony—how can the glow and excitement and mirth of games (in which the young naturally take their chief delight) be a preparation for that genuine worship which consists in a deep, calm, and steadfast love, trust, and reverence for the supreme Righteousness? Ought not those who control Churches to leave "pleasure" to those who control places of public amusement?

On the other hand, have the latter succeeded, or are they likely to succeed, in creating a high standard of "pleasure" among the poorer classes? Moreover, if those who control Churches are largely responsible for suppressing athletic games on the Christian Sunday, ought they not to do something to make the day attractive to the young, not only as a day of high thoughts and purifying worship (for such attractions as these cannot last through the whole day, the strain being too great), but also as a day from which "pleasure" is not quite shut out?

The question seems not yet ripe for solution.

Anything of the nature of a bribe to induce the young to come to Church for half an hour, as a preliminary to games afterwards, is sure to fail in the end, however great may be its immediate and superficial success.

The mere mention of the old "mysteries" and "moralities," such as were once acted in Churches to teach or

amuse the laity, seems to make a return to them, or to any substitute for them, impossible. We seem far off from the days when a weekly Ammergau play, or anything corresponding to it, could have a beneficial effect in an English parish. Perhaps even in Ammergau, the play, if weekly, would profit no one. It is not so easy to decide whether sports on Sunday in the intervals between services would do more good in preventing loafing and vice or more harm in converting the Sunday into a mere "Saturday whole-holiday." Old experiences ought to be collected before new experiments are tried, and the instinct of the congregation is likely, in many cases, to be a better guide than the good intentions of the clergy.

If we are to conjecture about the ultimate solution, we should say that the Saturday afternoon is to be given to sports, the Sunday to mental and spiritual exercise in which—besides direct worship—art and science are to contribute to the religion of the Christian Spirit. But neither art nor science will ever make up for the absence of that deep conviction without which all forms of the Christian religion must become lifeless and useless. There must be genuine "prophesying," genuine prayer, the presence of that "power" which is breathed by the Spirit of Christ.

§ 5

And here we are met by an objection: "Is this 'deep conviction' possible for those who are obliged, as you are, to reject so much of the letter of the Bible and the tradition of Authority, and to rely so

much on what you call 'the Spirit of Christ'? Though your 'Religion of the Spirit of Christ' may be helpful to a few, can it ever compete with the Religion of the Bible or the Religion of the Church, in its influence on the masses? These two religions have been tried and have, to some extent, 'worked.' Will yours 'work'? You want to be honest. You aim at undeceiving yourself by shaking off illusions. Do so, if you please. But do not expect that any religion will ever be successful that does not contain some admixture of a lie. The masses, if they are to be happy, must be allowed to deceive themselves. Some self-deception is the price we must pay for hopefulness, good spirits, energy, and general prosperity: 'The future lies in the hands of those who are *not undeceived.*'"

We reply that, as long as the masses can honestly believe in either of the two great religions of the Christian Law mentioned above, and can thereby find some access to the Spirit of Christ, so long they will do well to continue in either. We have no quarrel with them. But we think they cannot much longer honestly do so. Then they will do ill to continue. And even now, some of their leaders may need to be reminded that "not undeceived" does not mean the same as "self-deceiving." Neither in this world, nor in the next, does the future lie with those who deceive themselves, or refuse to be undeceived.

i "But what as to death? When a man is dying, does not nature seem a fraud, religion everything? Will you not long then for your old faith in the mira-

culous, and especially for your once unquestioning belief that the visible, audible, tangible Christ walked forth from the tomb whence the angel had rolled the stone away?"

No one ought to speak confidently about what he will feel in those last moments when the solid foundations of our fleshly and substantial nature must sink beneath us, and brain and heart may grow feeble together in the collapse of the material structure. Yet even if, under the depressing consciousness of being abandoned by all friendly and familiar things and faces and memories and thoughts, we felt constrained to cry out that we were "forsaken," might not the most helpful thought left to us be that Christ had uttered similar words, and yet had conquered the world? And at the worst, we should not be shaken in that sore trial by the suspicion that we had been disloyal to the living Truth by basing our trust in Him on what we suspected, or more than suspected, to be (for us) a lie.

ii But we may hope for something far beyond this. If the Spirit of Christ has possessed us, we ought to have formed a habit of practical faith. The dark and insoluble problems of this world and the next ought to be illuminated for us by an inextinguishable confidence that all these burdens of doubt may be cast upon God as we see Him revealed in the Eternal Word. We may be unable to say, we may even feel it presumptuous to hope, that the passage of the Dark River will bring us at once to the full fruition of Light. But this should cause no misgivings. We are going the way of death enough to know that death is revealed by the shaping

of all things from the beginning, dimly at first in the action of the pre-incarnate Word, but clearly afterwards, and with increasing clearness, as the way to a higher life; that we and our friends and countrymen and all the human race will be judged individually and collectively by the judgment of One whose justice is wiser and more loving than the purest human mercy; that the Passion and the Resurrection will be found to represent the real and spiritual history of the whole human race; and that, through the Mystery of Sacrifice, what is mortal will be ultimately merged in that which is immortal, and what is human will pass by dying into that which is divine.

THE END

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